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LENT AND HOLY WEEK

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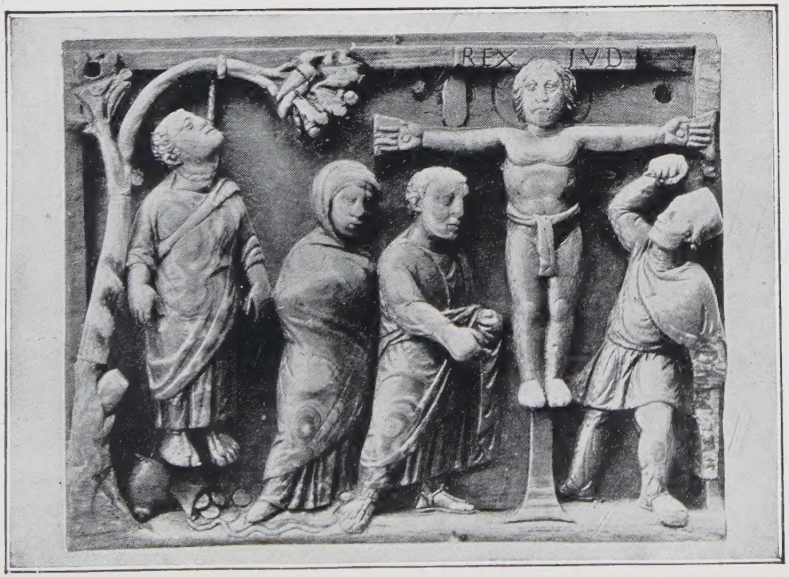

IVORY PANEL OF THE FIFTH CENTURY REPRESENTING THE CRUCIFIXION AND THE DEATH OF JUDAS. Original at the British Museum. (*See p.* 284.)

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LENT AND HOLY WEEK

Chapters on Catholic Observance and Ritual

BY

HERBERT THURSTON, S.J.

SECOND IMPRESSION

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To my Mother

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JOANNES GERARD, S.J.,
Censor Deputatus.

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Feb. 15*th*, 1904

Domine dilexi decorem domus tuæ et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ.—*Ps.* xxv. 8.

I love, O Lord, the beauty of Thy House,
I love the place wherein Thy glory dwells;
I love the silent speech, and sweet accord
Of holy ceremonies, dear to faith,
Wherein, as in a mirror, shows the zeal
That burns around the Throne of God, and breaks
Into a thousand forms of active joy.

—*Lyra Liturgica.*

Preface

THE volume which is here presented to the reader does not, I think, require any lengthy introduction. Its chief purpose is to supply a popular account of those external observances by which the season of paschal preparation is marked off from the rest of the ecclesiastical year. Although a devotional conception has not been excluded, the writer's principal object has been to touch upon points of historical and liturgical interest, points which often bring us into immediate relation with the practice of the early Christian centuries. The discipline of fasting, the lenten liturgy, and in particular the ceremonies of Holy Week, have all been treated with some degree of fulness, while an attempt has also been made to trace the history of certain devotions of more recent date, such as the *Quarant' Ore* and the 'Three Hours.' The book is not in any way controversial. Although written from a Catholic standpoint, it does not pretend to do more than supply a plain statement of liturgical facts, such as would be accepted by the more scientific students of every communion. The volume is more bulky

than I had intended, and it would of course have been easily possible to make it many times longer than it is; but it seemed necessary to keep within reasonable limits, and with the exception of an occasional reference, such as that, for instance, to Easter eggs and pancakes on p. 476, or the flowering of the graves on p. 209, I have thought it better to refrain from the tempting theme of *Volksgebräuche*. For a similar reason, ceremonies now obsolete have not as a rule been discussed at any great length. If the account given of the Easter Sepulchre might seem to be an exception, the intimate connexion of that rite with the existing *Quarant' Ore*, as well as its relation to the early history of the drama, (see page 457), may perhaps be deemed sufficient justification.

Five of the chapters, those on Palm Sunday, Tenebrae, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, have already appeared, at least in part, in the form of popular pamphlets.[1] These have all been revised and corrected, and some of them considerably enlarged. The substance of one or two other chapters has been published as articles in *The Month*, and I am in particular indebted to Messrs. Sands & Co. for permission to reprint the greater part of an essay on the *Three Hours* prefixed to a translation of Father Messia's little work on this subject, of which they are the publishers. To the same firm my thanks

[1] These are still on sale in this form by the Art and Book Company and the Catholic Truth Society.

are also due for permission to use five blocks taken from my book *The Holy Year of Jubilee*. Similarly I am much indebted to Mr. C. H. Read, F.S.A., Keeper of Mediæval Antiquities in the British Museum, for permission to reproduce two of the illustrations in the admirable *Guide to Early Christian Antiquities*, prepared for the Department by Mr. Dalton. Of the minor illustrations which appear in this volume two are taken from M. Rohault de Fleury's great work *La Messe*, and the rest from Picart, *Cérémonies Religieuses*, and other sources. I have also to return my sincere thanks to several friends, and in particular to Father P. Ryan, S.J., who, by the correction of proofs or in other ways, have kindly and substantially assisted in the preparation of this volume.

HERBERT THURSTON, S.J.

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CHAPTER I

Septuagesima and the Lenten Fast

If we would understand the full significance of the great Resurrection Feast, we must not merely study the liturgy of the eight days which follow Palm Sunday, but we must begin further back and pass in review the incidents of the long penitential season which serves as an introduction to the whole. What Holy Week is to Easter, that Lent is to Holy Week. Just as the meaning of Easter will only be fully comprehended by one who has tried to enter into the spirit of the days which precede, so the solemnities of Holy Week form both the climax and the justification of the change of ritual introduced nearly two months earlier.

Be it said also, that it is a true privilege to lead in some sort the life of the Church; and that to those who are able to carry out her fasts, take part in her ceremonies and recite her liturgy, there is given a share of her spirit, and a practical insight into the mysteries of our faith which

no amount of book explanation can quite replace. But our business here is with book explanations only, and I propose to begin this account of the great yearly celebration of the mysteries of man's Redemption with some brief notice of what is commonly and justly called the 'Holy Season' of Lent.

Those who have been present in the Cathedral Church of any diocese during the High Mass on the feast of the Epiphany will have witnessed a rite, formerly observed in almost every parish,[1] but now confined to Cathedral Churches alone. Before the *Credo* of the Mass, the archdeacon or some other high functionary, vested in a cope, mounts the pulpit, and there in a chant consecrated to this purpose he announces to the people the dates of the movable feasts of the forthcoming year.

Be it known to you, most dear brethren, he sings, that with the mercy of God, as we have rejoiced over the Nativity of Christ our Lord, so we make proclamation to you of the joyous festival of Our Saviour's

[1] In the *Liber Sacerdotalis*, a manual frequently printed at the beginning of the sixteenth century for the use of parish priests, a homily on this subject is provided for the feast of the Epiphany. As early as the year 541 in the 4th Council of Orleans it was decreed that every Bishop should announce the date of Easter to the people in his cathedral on the feast of the Epiphany. So also the Council of Auxerre in 586 seems to impose a similar duty upon all priests: "ut omnes presbiteri ante Epiphaniam missos suos dirigant, qui eis de principio Quadragesimæ nuntient et in ipsa Epiphania ad populum indicent."

Resurrection. Septuagesima Sunday will fall on such a day of such a month ; Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the most sacred season of Lent (*sacratissimae quadragesimae*) will be on such a day ; and on such another day we shall celebrate with joy the holy Pasch of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This rite of the solemn proclamation of the date of Easter and the beginning of Lent may be counted among the most venerable ceremonies of our liturgy. We can trace it back for nearly sixteen hundred years, to the festal letters of the great St. Athanasius, the earliest of which documents was written in A.D. 329. Ever since then, and probably even before that date, the pastors of the Church have made it one of their primary duties to give timely notice to their flocks of the approach of this season of prayer and penance. In the early centuries, when astronomical science was in its infancy, the astronomers of Alexandria who had inherited the traditions of the Chaldeans, were looked up to as especially skilful in calculating the movements of the heavenly bodies. It was to the Bishop of Alexandria therefore that the task was confided by the Fathers of Nicaea to determine for all the world the date of Easter[1] and of the penitential season

[1] In the *Conferences* of Cassian, who wrote at the beginning of the fifth century, we are informed that : ' Throughout the country of Egypt this custom is observed by ancient tradition, that when the feast of the Epiphany has been celebrated, the letters of the bishop of Alexandria are directed to all the churches ; whereby are

which preceded it. Several of the letters which St. Athanasius wrote in discharging this duty have been preserved to our own day. They are the earliest of lenten pastorals, and they throw into strong relief the importance which has been attached to the observance of Lent from the very earliest ages. But it will be a help to clearness if we arrange what has to be said upon the different aspects of our subject under definite headings.

Antiquity of the Lenten Fast

I do not think that we can assert positively that the institution of Lent can be traced back to the time of the Apostles. St. Irenæus, who wrote on the subject to Pope Victor about A.D. 190, seems to be the first to speak clearly of a special fast before Easter. His language is not quite plain, and there have been disputes as to his meaning, but he certainly bears witness to the existence of a fast of exceptional severity during Holy Week, and he declares that this tradition had come down to them from a much

notified not only to every town, but even to every monastery, the beginning of Lent and the day of Easter.' Coll. x. 2.

Although the Bishop of Alexandria was entrusted with the duty of determining the date, it was expressly provided that the Bishop of Rome was to notify it to the Church at large. Specimens of such letters are preserved among the works of Pope Leo the Great. Cf. Migne, P. L. 54, 1102, etc. Some interesting ancient formulæ for the proclamation of feasts have recently been published in his edition of the *Liber Comicus*, p. 391, by Dom Morin.

earlier period, though there was no uniformity as to the observance of it in different parts of the world.[1] There are similar allusions in Tertullian and other early writers. But it is in the festal letters of St. Athanasius already referred to that we are first brought face to face with a Lent hardly different from that which we now observe. These are the terms in which St. Athanasius writes to his flock in A.D. 331.

The beginning of the fast of forty days is on the 5th of Phamenoth (March 1), and when, as I have said, we have first been purified and prepared by these days, we also begin the Holy Week of the Great Pasch on the 10th of Pharmuthi (April 5), in which, my beloved brethren, we should observe more prolonged prayers and fastings and watchings, that we may be enabled to anoint our lintels with precious blood, and so escape the destroyer. We cease fasting, then, on the 15th of Pharmuthi (April 10), when we hear from the Angels in the evening of the seventh day of the

[1] This passage of Irenæus is only known to us through a quotation of Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* V. 24). It is certainly now the more generally received opinion that in the earliest age of the Church no fast of forty days was observed by the body of the faithful. See Duchesne, *Christian Worship* (the English translation of *Les Origines du Culte Chrétien*), pp. 241, seq.; Funk, *Die Entwicklung des Osterfastens*, in the *Theologische Quartalschrift*, 1893, p. 179, 1894, p. 126, and 1901, p. 639. These views seem to be endorsed by Dom Bäumer in his *Geschichte des Breviers*, p. 63. An opposite theory is held by Linsenmayr, *Entwicklung des Kirchlichen Fastendisciplin*, p. 39, and Probst, *Kirchliche Disciplin*, pp. 269, seq. On Irenæus, cf. further Th. Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des NT. Kanons*, IV, 283, seq., and VI, 31, seq. A forty days' fast is mentioned in the Canons of Hippolytus.

week, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? for He hath risen.'

Eight years later the same saint, after having travelled in western Europe as far north as Treves in Germany, despatches from Rome itself a letter to Serapion of Alexandria, admonishing him in such terms as these, to urge upon the people the duty of keeping the Lent.

For I have further deemed it highly necessary and very urgent, to make known to your modesty—for I have written this to each one—that thou shouldst proclaim the fast of forty days to the brethren, and persuade them to fast; to the end that while all the world is fasting, we who are in Egypt should not become a laughing-stock as the only people who do not fast, but take our pleasure in these days. . . . But O our Beloved! whether in this way or any other, exhort and teach them to fast forty days.

Seeing that this letter was despatched from Rome, there can, I think, be no reasonable doubt that at this period the custom of observing some sort of fast for six weeks before Easter was almost universal throughout the Church.[1] From that date testimonies multiply. Long courses

[1] I rather insist upon this point, as Dr. Funk, apparently overlooking the evidence of these letters, has maintained in certain articles in the *Theologische Quartalschrift* (1893 and 1894) that there is no evidence for the observance of Lent in the West before the time of St. Ambrose.

of sermons, and even whole treatises are devoted to the subject by the Fathers both in east and west. It will be sufficient for illustration's sake to quote one passage from the homily *On Fasting* of St. Basil the Great, who lived in the north of Asia Minor.

Fasting indeed is profitable at all seasons, but much more at this time of Lent, when throughout all the world this ordinance of fasting is proclaimed. There is no island, there is no continent, no city or people, no distant corner of the globe, where the announcement is not listened to. Nay, armies on the march, and travellers on the road, sailors as well as merchants, all alike hear the ordinance and receive it with joy. Let no man then separate himself from the number of fasters in which every race of mankind, every period of life, every class of society is included.[1]

It is to be feared that the practice of Christians in our degenerate days is very different from this.

Severity of the Fast in the Early Church

It is, however, when we look into the rigour of these penitential observances, as practised by our forefathers in the faith, that the indulgence accorded to Catholics in our own age becomes most apparent. In the narrative of St.

[1] *De Jejunio*, II. St. Basil died in A.D. 379.

Silvia,[1] or rather Egeria, a lady who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land about the year 380, we find a full account of the extraordinary abstinence of which she was the witness in Jerusalem during the lenten season. If it were not for the obvious candour of the writer, and for the fact that her description is confirmed by St. Epiphanius and other contemporary authorities, we should be inclined to think that the marvels of which she speaks must be mere travellers' tales. We learn from her pages of the existence in the East of a whole class of penitents who subsisted for the eight weeks preceding Easter upon two meals only in each week, taken on the Saturday and the Sunday respectively. This is how Egeria writes upon the subject in her rude Latin, the extreme homeliness of which can hardly be disguised even in a translation.

The custom here of those who fast in Lent, she says, is that those whom they call *hebdomadarii*—that is, those who make the weeks—take their meal on the Sunday, when service is over at the fifth hour

[1] This most interesting document, from which I shall often have occasion to quote, was brought to light for the first time only a few years since, and was edited by Signor Gamurrini in the *Studi e Documenti di Storia e Diritto*, Second Edition, Rome, 1888. It has hitherto been supposed that the author of the narrative was a certain St. Silvia, the sister of Rufinus, but Dom Férotin has recently shown in the *Revue des Questions Historiques* (October 1903) that the real author of the *Peregrinatio* was unquestionably a Spanish lady, named Etheria, or Egeria. It is by this latter name that I shall in future refer to her in these pages.

(i.e. about 11 a.m.). And when they have breakfasted on the Sunday, they do not eat until early on the (following) Saturday, as soon as they have communicated in the Anastasis.[1]

It is satisfactory, however, to learn that this very severe rule was optional and tempered with a wise discretion in the case of those of feebler constitution. After repeating, if possible in still plainer language, that those who 'make the weeks' touch no food from before noon on Sunday until the early morning of the following Saturday, Egeria goes on to explain:

For the custom prevails that all those who are, as they say here, 'Renuntiants,' whether men or women, only eat once a day, and this not only in Lent, but throughout the year. If there are any of these Renuntiants who cannot keep the entire week's fast, in the manner we described above, throughout Lent, they take a meal on the Thursday in the middle (of the week). Those who cannot make this fast either, fast for two days at a time throughout Lent, and those who cannot do even this much, fast from one evening to the next. No one exacts any account as to what each man is bound to do, but every one does just what he is able; neither is he praised who fulfils all requirements, nor is he blamed who does less. Such is the custom here. And their food during the days of Lent is of this kind: they neither eat

[1] The *Anastasis* was the chapel of the Resurrection at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

bread which cannot be crumbled, nor taste oil, nor anything else which is got from trees, but live on water and a little gruel made out of flour. So the Lenten fast is kept as we have said.

It would not seem that the practices here described were of general observance even in the East, but the so-called Apostolical Constitutions indicate a certain uniformity in the 'dry fast' (*xerophagia*) kept immediately before Easter Day by all classes of the faithful. We learn from this source that the Christians partook of nothing but bread, salt, and herbs, taking water for their drink and abstaining during this time from all kinds of wine and grease. After the meal which they ate at about 3 o'clock on the Thursday afternoon, they were commanded to touch no food until the Easter Sunday morning at cock-crow, a provision which, when we remember the fatigue of the Church Services at this season, and especially of the long paschal vigil, must have demanded an extraordinary effort of endurance. Still it must not be supposed that otherwise, either as regards the nature of the fast or the date of its commencement, there was uniformity in these early centuries throughout the Christian world. The Lady Egeria, though familiar in her own country with a Lenten fast of forty days, was evidently surprised at what she witnessed in the East, and we learn from many sources, of the diversity

observable between one portion of the Church and another as to the foods which were considered allowable as lenten fare. Socrates (c. 450) in his *Ecclesiastical History* (v. 22) is quite explicit on this point.

Now we may notice (he says) that men differ not only in respect to the number of the days, but also in the character of the abstinence from food which they practise. For some abstain from every sort of creature that has life, while others, of all living creatures, eat of fish only. Others eat birds as well as fish, because, according to the Mosaic account of the creation, they too sprang from the water; others abstain from fruit covered with a hard shell and from eggs. Some eat dry bread only, others not even that; others again, when they have fasted till the ninth hour (three o'clock) partake of various kinds of food.

But despite these divergences the general tendency especially in the East seems to have been towards an extreme of severity. St. Epiphanius, for instance, speaks of the zealous souls (*σπουδαῖοι*) who prolong their fast to two, three, or four days, or who even pass the entire week without food until cock-crow on the following Sunday. This was the *ὑπέρθεσις* or *superpositio* which was commended by Tertullian and the Montanists. So we find St. Cyril in his *Catechetical Instructions*, delivered in Jerusalem not many years before Egeria

paid her visit there, telling his hearers on Easter Eve—

We might say much more now, but as you have already been wearied by the prolonged fast (ὑπερθέσεως) of the Parasceve and by the watchings, let what has been said suffice for a while.[1]

But it is time for us to come back from these records of primitive times, to things which have a more immediate connexion with the ritual observed in our own day. Let me begin by saying a few words about those preliminary weeks which follow the Sundays known to us under the names of Septuagesima and Sexagesima.

Duration of the Lenten Fast

If we open a missal or breviary and study at all attentively its text and rubrics, we can hardly fail to notice how undecided are the indications they give of the exact time of the commencement of Lent. It is as though the Church could not make up her mind to plunge all at once into the full tide of the penitential season. We may remark that these changes take place in three distinct stages, and they are so conspicuous that even the most unobservant of the laity can hardly avoid being struck by them.

First, on Septuagesima Sunday, nine weeks before Easter, the Church assumes purple vest-

[1] No. xviii., cap. 17.

ments, the colour of mourning, she lays aside altogether the joyful chant of *Alleluia*, she omits the *Gloria in excelsis* at Mass except upon feast days, the *Te Deum* is no longer said in the ferial office, the chant called the Tract is introduced after the Gradual, and amongst other minor changes which could only be explained to those who are familiar with the Breviary, the *Miserere* is introduced amongst the psalms of Lauds, and at the beginning of each Hour, *Laus tibi, Domine; Rex æternæ gloriæ* is substituted for the *Alleluia* after the *Gloria Patri*.

Sixteen days after this, on Ash Wednesday, the lenten fast begins. From this time forth until Low Sunday it may be noticed that each day of each week is 'liturgical,' that is, it has assigned to it in the Missal a 'proper' or separate Mass of its own. Commonly, of course, the Masses at which we assist during Lent are said of the festivals of the saints which occur then as at other times, but we may notice that during Lent, when the Priest says Mass in white or red vestments, the book is shifted at the end and the last gospel which is read is that assigned to the week day, the gospel of the *feria*, as it is technically called. Besides this, the organ is now silenced for all those services which are strictly liturgical and belong to the lenten season.[1] The dalmatics at High Mass are re-

[1] Rightly or wrongly the organ is commonly played at Benediction

placed by folded chasubles, and as we may see in the Missal, there is now added in all the ferial Masses a new variable prayer after the Post-Communion. This is called the *oratio super populum* (the prayer over the people), and is preceded by the monition, which should properly be spoken by the deacon, *Humiliate capita vestra Deo*, 'Bow down your heads before God.'

But even yet, although the penitential ashes have been sprinkled on our foreheads, Lent has not fully begun. It is only on the eve of the First Sunday that those who say the Divine Office may recite Vespers before midday; this being a comparatively modern and very indulgent commutation for the ancient practice of deferring the one meal in Lent until after the time of Vespers, 4 p.m. or 5 p.m.[1] Again, if we look at the prayer called the Secret in the Mass of the first Sunday of Lent we shall find that it speaks of the *Sacrificium quadragesimalis initii*, 'the sacrifice of the opening of Lent,' as if the Fast were only now beginning. Moreover, as

or at Mass on festivals on the plea that these services do not strictly form part of the liturgy of Lent, though they take place in Lent.

[1] In practice this rubric is brought home to the faithful by the fact that in churches where Vespers are sung publicly in the evening on feasts, the office of Compline is substituted for Vespers during Lent, the Vespers, according to rule, having already been recited before the dinner hour. Supposing, however, that a feast fell on the Thursday or Friday after Ash Wednesday, it would then be proper, even though the fast has begun, to sing Vespers rather than Compline, in the evening.

our Vesper books will show, the Breviary prescribes for the first time with the Sunday a new set of hymns and versicles proper to the penitential season, which last unchanged until Passiontide.

What is the explanation, it will be asked, of this diversity of starting-points which seem to some extent in conflict with one another, and which introduce confusion into the liturgy? The explanation after all is not very far to seek. The anomaly is simply due to the fact that at different ages and in different parts of the world the lenten fast has lasted for different periods and been calculated upon different principles. Just as one of the venerable cathedrals of the Middle Ages bears testimony to the succession in the past of many different styles of architecture and many different builders, so the liturgy of the Church speaks eloquently of its antiquity by exhibiting traces of many varied and often heterogeneous elements which in the course of ages it has adopted and assimilated.

I must resist the temptation to go very deeply into the matter, but a few words at least are necessary to make this explanation clear.

While the duration of the fast of Lent was always controlled by the remembrance that our Blessed Lord, like Moses and Elias[1] in Old

[1] The fact that Moses and Elias had, like our Lord, fasted for forty days, probably explains the appearance of the gospel of the Transfiguration during Lent in almost every known liturgy,

Testament times, had fasted for forty days, there were several causes which introduced a diversity of usage in determining this forty days' period. In the first place it was customary in many parts of the East to exclude Holy Week itself. During Holy Week was kept the paschal fast; and the lenten fast, it was argued, ought to have lasted forty days before Holy Week began. Again, throughout almost all the East it was considered unlawful to fast either on the Saturday or on the Sunday, whence it resulted that there were only five fasting days in each week. Then the question arose: Ought Lent to be counted as a period of forty days, during which there was fasting, or was it bound strictly to include forty fasting days? As these questions were differently answered, so Lent was necessarily made to begin earlier or later. At Jerusalem Egeria found that they fasted for eight weeks. This gave exactly forty fasting days, and here it would seem that the Holy Week itself was not separately counted. At Constantinople, on the other hand, it is probable that in St. Gregory's time a fast of nine weeks was observed, the extra week being due to a desire to include forty fasting days complete over and above the great week of the Passion, which was observed as a separate paschal fast.

In the West no scruple was commonly felt in observing the Saturday as a fast. Still to this rule there were exceptions, especially in the

earlier periods. For instance, St. Augustine places the Saturday liturgically almost on a level with the Sunday; and the second Council of Braga, in Spain, A.D. 572, while prohibiting the feasts of the martyrs to be celebrated in Lent, made an exception not only of the Sunday, but of the Saturday as well.[1] So we find in the extremely interesting liturgical work known as the *Liber Comicus*,[2] which sheds a flood of light upon the ritual usage of Toledo in the seventh century, or earlier, that the Mass during Lent was celebrated on ordinary week-days at the ninth hour, but on Saturday at the third —a clear proof that no fast was kept upon this day. So St. Ambrose at Milan, while stating that he regarded the neglect of the fast as no light sin (*non leve peccatum*),[3] lets us know that on the Saturdays, as well as the Sundays, the fast was not to be kept. In spite, however, of this difference about the Saturday, an almost general uniformity seems to have prevailed throughout the West as to the *date* of the fast, the Lent beginning everywhere on the Monday

1 Mai, *Nova P.P. Bibliotheca*, I. n. 125, apud Morin, *Liber Comicus*, p. 64. Cf. Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 245, on the Councils of Agde and Orleans.

2 Discovered and edited by Dom Germain Morin, O.S.B., as the first volume of the series *Anecdota Maredsolana*. To the notes in this work, and to other articles of the same editor in the *Revue Bénédictine*, the writer desires to express his many obligations.

3 Ambrose, *De Elia et Jejun.* c. 10 and 22. Sermo 21. Cf. Sermo 23.

of the sixth week before Easter. Such we learn from Egeria was the rule in Galicia, such the *Liber Comicus* proves to have been the law in Toledo, the Sermons of St. Augustine afford ample testimony for Carthage, the practice of Capua in 546 may be read in the *Epistolarium Fuldense*, and in Milan the custom has lasted even to this day.

All this shows very clearly that originally in the Western Church, Lent was not necessarily understood to be a succession of forty fasts, but rather a forty days' preparation for Easter, in which fasting, though it played a leading part, was not the exclusive and dominant motive. It is consequently by no means certain that all the remaining days of the week, even when we leave the Saturdays out of the question, were in the beginning everywhere and equally kept as fasts. There is a good deal in these early liturgical observances, as they are shadowed forth in the *Codex Fuldensis*, the *Liber Comicus*, the St. Cuthbert's Gospels, etc., which suggests a doubt on this point, especially with regard to Thursdays.[1] To speak of Rome in particular, there

[1] The argument is based especially on the sequence of the Lent Communions, to which I must return later. It has been worked out by Dom Cagin of Solesmes, but I only know of his paper through the account given of it by Dom Morin in the *Revue Bénédictine*. It is, however, to Cardinal Tommasi that the credit is due of having first directed attention to the bearing of these Lent Communions on the question before us. (See the Appendix to the *Vetus Missale Romanum*, edited by Father Azevedo, S.J.)

is the greatest difference of opinion as to the nature of the primitive lenten fast observed there. The evidence seems very contradictory, and Mgr. Duchesne, amongst others, believes that the original fast lasted only for three weeks, though these three weeks were not continuous, but were distributed throughout the period of our modern Lent; three other weeks, during which no fasting was enjoined, alternating with the three fasting weeks. It is not easy to decide the question with any confidence. The Church historian, Socrates, distinctly says that the Romans in his time 'fasted for *three* weeks continuously before Easter except on Saturday and Sunday,' but we have good reason to doubt whether he was not thinking of Ravenna,[1] for at Rome it is practically certain that Saturday was not treated as exempt. On the other hand, it may be urged in Mgr. Duchesne's favour that several writers of the fifth and early sixth centuries allude to a practice of fasting only the alternate weeks throughout the lenten period,[2] without however connecting this custom specially with Rome. What is certain is that St. Leo clearly speaks of a period of forty days (*quadragesima*) during which fasting was observed,[3]

1 See Mangani, *L'Antica Liturgia Romana*, vol. iii. p. 200.

2 See Pseudo Ambrosius, Sermon 34, 'Audio complures fideles alternis in quadragesima hebdomadis abstinere.' Cf. Sozomen. Bk. viii. ch. 16.

3 Sermon iv. *De Quadragesima*.

and seeing that St. Athanasius, as already noticed, used similar or even clearer language a century earlier, and St. Gregory the Great a century and a half later, it seems simplest to suppose that no substantial modification had been introduced during the interval. Great stress has been laid upon a statement which St. Gregory made to his devout hearers when preaching in Rome upon the first Sunday in Lent, to the effect that the actual fasting days before them number thirty-six, since the Sunday has to be excluded from each of the six weeks, and that these thirty-six days form exactly the tithe or tenth part of the year.[1] But it is perhaps difficult to conclude from this passage alone that St. Gregory's Lent did not begin with Ash Wednesday. The idea of the tithing of the year is found in other early writers who can hardly be supposed to be referring to a Lent of exactly thirty-six days.[2] Thus St. Dorotheus

[1] See Migne, P.L. 76, 1137.

[2] It is absolutely certain that in the time of Ælfric Lent began on Ash Wednesday. Nevertheless, in preparing a sermon in Anglo-Saxon for popular use on the first Sunday in Lent, he felt no scruple in paraphrasing St. Gregory thus: 'Why is this fast computed for forty days? In every year there are reckoned three hundred and sixty-five days; now, if we tithe these yearly days, then will there be six and thirty tithing days, and from this day to the holy Easter day are two and forty days. Take then the six Sundays from that number, and there will be six and thirty days of the year's tithing days reckoned for our abstinence. . . . For twelve months we live in a different spirit; now we shall, at this time, repair our heedlessness, and live to God—we who at other times have lived to ourselves.' Ælfric's Homilies (Ed. Thorpe), vol. i. p. 178. But while

in the East writes that 'the holy Apostles consecrated the fast of Lent as a tithing of the year to penance and the purging away of sins,' [1] and Pope Nicholas I., in the ninth century, touches upon the same consideration; while the thought is also repeated, even more explicitly, in certain Anglo-Saxon Church ordinances quoted on a subsequent page. The one point which is quite certain is, that considerable divergences existed as to the keeping of Lent even among the different branches of the Western Church, and we can understand how St. Ambrose said to St. Augustine at Milan, who consulted him upon the point: 'When I go to Rome I fast on Saturdays; when I stay here I do not fast. So do thou act also, and to whatever Church thou mayest come, keep the custom which prevails there. In this way thou wilt not be a stumbling-block to others, nor others to thee.' [2]

Ælfric spoke thus, both he and his hearers knew perfectly well that the Lenten fast consisted of forty days, not thirty-six. The idea that Lent is the tithe of the year is found much earlier than the time of St. Gregory in the conferences of the Egyptian monk Cassian. Thus he says: 'We who are bidden to offer up the tithing of our worldly substance and of the fruits of the earth ought much more to offer the tithing of our time and of our daily duties (*conversatio*) and of all the works of our hands.' *Collatio* xxii. cap. 24. The same conception recurs in some of the early English Penitentials, such as those of Theodore and Egbert.

[1] Doctrina 15. Migne, P.G. 88, 1787. St. Dorotheus, who seems to have written before the time of St. Gregory, goes into the most elaborate calculations to prove his point. See Nilles, *Kalendarium*, II. 81.

[2] St. Augustine, *Ep.* 54.

Septuagesima

It will have been understood from what has just been said, that what with the variations of custom, not only between the East and West, but among the different Churches of the West itself, and what with the stricter or laxer interpretations of the injunction to fast forty days after the example of our Blessed Lord, it was natural that a sort of penumbra of austerity should have been formed at the beginning of the lenten season; for while the *terminus ad quem* was fixed by the date of Easter Sunday, the *terminus a quo* was a matter of local or even individual usage. It is highly probable that the prevalence of monastic institutions in the West, will have had a good deal to say to that anticipation of the penitential tide, which survives in the two weeks of Septuagesima and Sexagesima. In the original Rule of St. Benedict no change was contemplated in the liturgy or in the daily life of the monks, before what we now call the first Sunday in Lent. But it is certain, on the other hand, that the anticipatory three weeks are emphasized in several monastic rules of early date. Thus, to quote a single illustration, we have evidence that at Winchester in the tenth century the occurrence of Septuagesima was marked, not only by the laying aside of the *Alleluia* and the *Gloria in excelsis*, but also by the withdrawal from the diet of the community of all butter and grease, a deprivation, as will be readily under-

stood, of the most penitential kind.[1] Moreover a strictly lenten régime began on the Monday after Quinquagesima, and this was intensified a week later by deferring the one meal until after Vespers.

But before we go further it seems desirable to enquire into the anomaly of the names *Septuagesima*, *Sexagesima* and the rest, which obviously cannot, as the meaning of the words would imply, be respectively seventy, sixty, and fifty days off Easter.

In order to understand the genesis of this curious nomenclature, we must first remember that though we ourselves use a Teutonic word, *Lent*, to denote the time of fasting, it is expressed in the language of the Church, and in general in all the Romance tongues, by the Latin word *quadragesima* (with its derivatives *carême*, *quaresima*, *cuaresima*), which means simply *fortieth*. Moreover, this term *quadragesima* is itself only explained when we recall the old Testament word Pentecost[2] (ἡ πεντηκοστή), a

[1] Thus in the *Concordia Regularis* of St. Æthelwold we read: 'In Septuagesima vero pinguedo intermittatur usque in Quinquagesimam; a Quinquagesima vero quadragesimalem teneant abstinentiam more solito.' Compare the Eynsham abstract: 'Consuetudo dicit intermittere pinguedinem in Septuagesima.' *Winchester Obedientiary Rolls*, p. 188. It may be noted that in the Greek Church to this day abstinence from meat begins with the Sunday corresponding to Sexagesima, while cheese and milk foods are permitted for a week longer.

[2] πεντηκοστή appears in the Septuagint, and in this sense may be called an Old Testament word.

Greek word signifying 'the fiftieth (day),' and applied to denote the festival kept by the Jews fifty days after the Pasch. In the Christian dispensation, of course, Pentecost means Whitsunday, the fiftieth day from Easter, that is, if both the first and last Sunday of the seven weeks are counted in. But from its strict meaning of the fiftieth day, the term Pentecost was extended at a very early period to denote the *interval* which lay between Easter and the day of Pentecost, almost the whole, in fact, of what we call paschal time. Moreover the Greek word was translated literally into Latin, and the expression *Quinquagesima* may, not unfrequently, be found in the fourth and fifth centuries in the sense of the paschal season, and *dominica secunda* or *tertia* IN *Quinquagesima*, was used to designate the second or third Sunday within the pentecostal, i.e. paschal, period; in other words, the second or third Sunday after Easter. When this use of words had become familiar, it was most natural that the forty days' period of the lenten fast should be styled in Greek ἡ τεσσαρακοστή, and in Latin *quadragesima* (fortieth), which is the exact equivalent of the Greek; and as a matter of fact we find both terms familiarly used in the meaning of Lent, before the time of St. Augustine and St. Jerome. But given *Quadragesima* = a forty days' period, and *Quinquagesima* = a fifty days' period, the use of *Septuagesima* and *Sexagesima*

may be considered fairly intelligible. None the less the names seem to have caused a difficulty to no less eminent a student of liturgy than the Emperor Charlemagne, for, as he plausibly objected to Alcuin, Sexagesima is not sixty, nor Septuagesima seventy days off Easter. We can hardly doubt, however, that Alcuin's answer, which finds a reason in analogy and in the popular love of round numbers, is substantially the true one. The term Quadragesima was natural, and strictly accurate when computed from the *πᾶσχα σταυρώσιμον* Good Friday. Quinquagesima was also natural, having the analogy of Pentecost in its favour, and being really fifty days off Easter. With these two terms already fixed, it was only to be expected that the preceding Sunday should be designated as *Dominica in Sexagesima*—'the Sunday within the Sexagesimal period,' just as the various Sundays of Lent were called *Dominica* 2^{a}, 3^{a}, *etc. in Quadragesima*. When therefore finally, after these names had become sufficiently familiar, another Sunday was added to the series, it was almost a necessity that its style should be chosen upon the same principle. How familiar this kind of nomenclature had become may be seen from the usage of Toledo, in which Mid-Lent Sunday more than once appears under the name *in vicesima*, while in another part of the world Sexagesima Sunday is described as *Dominica* 2^{a} *in Septuagesima*.

The 'Closure' of Alleluia

The laying aside of the *Alleluia* at Vespers on the eve of Septuagesima is now a very simple matter. At the end of the *Benedicamus Domino* two *alleluias* are added, just as they are added to the *Ite Missa est* in Easter week, and the whole choir in like manner answer *Deo gratias, alleluia, alleluia;* after which, the rubric tells us, the *alleluia* is not heard again until Holy Saturday, while in its place after the *Deus in adjutorium* there is said *Laus tibi, Domine, rex æternæ gloriæ* (Praise be to Thee, O Lord, King of eternal glory).

But in earlier ages when the loss of the bright and joyous modulations attached to the *alleluia* changed in some sense the whole musical character of the service, and when for laity as well as clergy the Church offices were the chief source of interest, distraction, and inspiration in their uneventful lives, the giving up of the *alleluia* when it recurred each year at this season was a noteworthy occurrence attended with no little pomp and circumstance.[1] The means used to magnify the occasion were very various, as were also the different times chosen for saying farewell

[1] Even among the laity down to the Reformation the laying aside of Alleluia seems to have attracted attention on account of its impressive ceremonial. The reformer Frank Wessels (*Schilderung des Katholischen Gottesdienstes in Stralsund* § 6) devotes a special section to this, and he tells us that the children had a song about it: "*Alleluia ys gelecht*," etc.

to this joyous acclamation. In some Churches the *alleluia* was given up at Prime on the Saturday, in others at None, in others after Vespers or Compline, in some it was continued until the evening of the Sunday itself, while not a few Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries, adhering strictly to the text of St. Benedict's Rule, retained it unaltered until Quinquagesima. With regard to the manner of the farewell, almost every church seems to have had its own different custom, and these local usages, while always repeating and prolonging in a conspicuous way the acclamation so dearly loved, were as remarkable in some cases for their almost puerile realism as they were in others for the sublime language of their hymns and appropriate prayers. Nowhere perhaps was the occasion celebrated more worthily than in the Mozarabic rite, though here the *alleluia* was continued until the first Sunday in Lent. The hymn sung was the ancient one *Alleluia perenne* used in the Sarum and other liturgies as well as in Spain—

Alleluia piis edite laudibus
Cives ætherei psallite unanimiter
Alleluia perenne,[1] etc.

The best known English version[2] begins thus—

[1] Migne, P.L. 86, 259.

[2] This is Dr. J. M. Neale's. It was first printed in his *Mediaeval Hymns and Sequences.*

Sing *Alleluia* forth in duteous praise,
Ye citizens of heaven ; O sweetly raise
An endless *Alleluia.*

Ye Powers who stand before the Eternal Light,
In hymning choirs re-echo to the height
An endless *Alleluia.*

The Holy City shall take up your strain,
And with glad songs resounding wake again
An endless *Alleluia.*

There is sweet rest for weary ones brought back,
There is glad food and drink, which ne'er shall lack
An endless *Alleluia.*

After this hymn follow the *Capitula*—

Alleluia in heaven and on earth : it is perpetuated in heaven, it is protracted on earth. There it sounds continuously, here dutifully. There everlastingly, here sweetly. There rapturously, here harmoniously. There ineffably, here earnestly. There without syllables, here in musical numbers. There from the Angels, here from the people ;—the which, at the birth of Christ our Lord, not only in heaven, but on earth, did the heavenly hosts intone, while they proclaimed : 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.'

Then after an appropriate benediction, we have the *lauda*, a sort of responsory, in the following terms—

Thou shalt go, O *Alleluia :* Thou shalt have a prosperous journey, O *Alleluia. ℟.* And again with joy thou shalt return to us, O *Alleluia. ℣.* For in

their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. ℟. And again with joy thou shalt return to us, O *Alleluia*.[1]

As a contrast to this we may note the very eccentric development which, if we may trust a French writer of the eighteenth century, the farewell to *Alleluia* had assumed in the Cathedral of Toul.[2]

There, on the eve of Septuagesima, an elaborate function was gone through representing symbolically the burial of *Alleluia*—it is obvious that the ambiguous word *depositio* (putting away) must have suggested the idea—and the ceremony seems to have been carried out with all the detail of an actual interment. It was the choir-boys (*pueri chori*) who officiated, dressed in their best cassocks and surplices, bearing candles together with a cross, holy water and incense. They carried a bier and an effigy[3] out of the church

[1] A very similar ritual was observed at Autun: See Nilles, *Kalendarium*, II. p. 17.

[2] Remembering this ceremony, when we read in the customs of Ulric of Cluny that 'at Septuagesima fat is buried along with the Alleluia' (*in Septuagesima adeps simul cum Alleluia sepelitur*) it is difficult to decide whether he is speaking literally or only metaphorically.

[3] *Portantes glebam*. *Gleba* means, normally, a corpse, and is said to be the same word as the German *Leib*. It is found as early as St. Gregory of Tours. That the children of the choir should really have borne a dead body out of the church and interred it seems quite incredible. We must assume that some kind of effigy or lay figure is meant. It would not seem natural to suppose that *Gleba* is here used in one of its other meanings, e.g. sod or sheaf of corn.

into the cloister, singing the while a dirge of lamentation; they blessed the grave with holy water, and incensed it; and after burying the symbolical figure, they returned to their places in the choir.

Again, in another French cathedral we hear of a top with *Alleluia* marked upon it in letters of gold, which one of the choir boys on the eve of Septuagesima whipped down the nave and out of the church[1] at the end of Vespers. But in all these quaint ceremonies, real or legendary, it would probably be a mistake to take the matter too seriously or to suppose that the ecclesiastics who tolerated such customs were not alive to their more humorous aspect. It was part of the simple spirit of faith which then prevailed, to see no irreverence in this mimic representation of the children, who no doubt played their parts with intense interest and infinite seriousness. Our knowledge of what was tolerated in the mystery plays, often performed in the closest association with processions of the Blessed Sacrament, should convince us that, in spite of much rude jesting in word and action, a high level of reverence and earnestness was almost everywhere maintained. It is only Puritanism which has sought to persuade the world that a prayerful heart and a long face must necessarily go together. Moreover, whatever may be thought

[1] The locality in this case is not named, and I am strongly tempted to regard this latter ceremony as apocryphal.

of such eccentric developments as those of Toul, there is no reason to believe that these extravagances were very general, while on the other hand the *Alleluia* farewell hymn which marked the same occasion, and which we can trace in England, France, and almost everywhere in Western Europe, may count amongst the most striking mediaeval compositions of its kind.

Let the reader judge from the translation which, though inadequate, is here given as the best available. It is taken from that admirable collection, *Hymns Ancient and Modern.*

Alleluia, song of sweetness,
Voice of joy that cannot die;
Alleluia is the anthem
Ever dear to choirs on high;
In the house of God abiding
Thus they sing eternally.

Alleluia, thou resoundest,
True Jerusalem and free;
Alleluia, joyful mother,
All thy children sing with thee;
But by Babylon's sad waters
Mourning exiles now are we.

Alleluia cannot always
Be our song while here below;
Alleluia, our transgressions
Make us for a while forego;
For the solemn time is coming
When our tears for sin must flow.

Therefore in our hymns we pray Thee,
Grant us, Blessed Trinity,
At the last to keep Thine Easter
In our Home beyond the sky,
There to Thee for ever singing
Alleluia joyfully. Amen.

Although this hymn has been assigned by Dr. Neale to the thirteenth century, it is certainly two or three hundred years older than that.[1] One point of special interest it contains is the allusion to the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, in which God's chosen people under stress of the Divine visitation were constrained to lay aside their songs of joy. There can be little doubt that it was the remembrance of this analogy which had much to do with the general adoption of Septuagesima Sunday as the epoch of the discontinuance of the *Alleluia* and the *Gloria in excelsis*. The Anglo-Saxon Abbot Ælfric, who flourished about the year 1000, in his homily for this Sunday, explains the matter devotionally to his hearers.

We will say to you at this present tide, he begins, why the holy congregation omits in God's Church *Alleluia* and *Gloria in excelsis Deo* from this present day until the holy Easter season. There was a wise doctor called Amalarius, who wrote a book on ecclesiastical customs, what the ceremonies of God's services of yearly recurrence betoken; and said of this

[1] See Fr. Blume, S. J. "Des Alleluia Leben, Begräbniss und auferstehung" in the *Stimmen aus Maria Laach*, vol. 52, p. 442.

present tide, which is called Septuagesima, that it fulfils the betokening of the seventy years that the people of Israel served the king of Babylon in captivity. Septuagesima is a seventy-fold number. The tide begins on this Sunday, nine weeks before Easter, and ends on the Saturday of Easter week; hence to that day are reckoned seventy days, and the Israelitish folk for their wicked deeds and transgressions were harrowed and for seventy years continued in Babylonian servitude without bliss and mirth. Now God's Church observes this seventy-fold number voluntarily for its sins, as the old Israel observed it by compulsion in captivity until the merciful God again, after their tribulations, delivered them and led them to their country.

The prophet Jeremias prophesied of the nation of Israel, that in that space of seventy years they should cease from that voice of bliss and rejoicing, from the voice of the bridegroom and the bride. Now, in imitation of that, God's servants omit the heavenly hymns *Alleluia* and *Gloria in excelsis Deo* in this Septuagesima, because it is fitting that we voluntarily from this present day prepare ourselves with more strictness for the ghostly fight, as the Church service exhorts us to lamentation and repentance of our sins. . . .

Verily the daily services show that from this day until Easter is our time of mourning and of repentance for our sins with some strictness. *Alleluia* is a Hebrew word, which is in Latin *Laudate Dominum* (praise the Lord), and no tongue is so sublime as Hebrew. We now leave that sublime tongue in our

Septuagesima, and say in Latin, *Laus tibi, Domine, rex æternæ gloriæ:* that is, Praise be to Thee, O Lord, King of Eternal Glory. By this humble Latin speech we show that we should incline ourselves to a humbler life at this tide. *Alleluia* is, as we said, a heavenly song, as John the Apostle said that he heard a great voice in heaven, as it were the sound of trumpets, and they sang *Alleluia.* Angels sang *Gloria in excelsis Deo* when Christ was born bodily in the world. Now we leave the heavenly hymns at our penitence tide, and with true humility pray the Almighty that we may see His heavenly Easter tide, after the universal resurrection, in which we will sing to Him eternally *Alleluia* without weariness. Amen.

The Fast and its Relaxations

Although, as we have seen, there is no clear evidence that in apostolic and sub-apostolic times a fast of precisely forty days was of universal observance, still it can hardly be questioned that the practice established itself at a very early period of fasting rigorously for a term of days which often exceeded, and rarely fell much short of, that mystic number. Moreover, amid some diversity of usage as to the kind of food permitted in the lenten season, all the indications point to the conclusion that the fast was absolute until the one meal permitted was taken in the late afternoon or evening, and that the prohibition of flesh-meat was never relaxed.

'We fast, abstaining from wine and flesh,'

says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, 'not,' he adds 'because we turn from them as abominations, but because we look for the reward.' [1] 'We abstain,' says St. Basil, 'from flesh and wine.' [2] St. Augustine, his contemporary, speaks as though it were the common rule to take no meal before the late evening,[3] and we learn from the Church historian Socrates, that those who broke their fast at three o'clock in the afternoon were considered to violate the precept.[4] Taken as a whole the monitions of the Fathers on the subject of fasting are distinctly severe, and in particular they were wont to thunder against those who ingeniously defeated the main purpose of the fast by self-indulgence in matters that were not explicitly forbidden.

What advantage, says St. Jerome, do you hope to receive by refraining from the use of oil, whilst at the same time you seek out rare and exquisite fruits —Carian dried figs, pepper, dates of the palm tree, bread made of fine flour, pistachio-nuts? The garden is ransacked to furnish palatable dainties which turn us aside from the narrow way to heaven. Plain ordinary bread ought to content him who fasts.[5]

Or again:

We find that there are some observers of Lent, says St. Augustine, more luxurious than sincerely religious, seeking rather new delights than chastising

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1 Cat. iv. § 27.
2 Hom. I., *De Jejun.*, No. 5.
3 *De Mor. Eccl. Cath.* c. 33.
4 *Hist. Eccl.* v. 22.
5 *Ep.* 34: Ad Nepotianum.

ancient lusts. They fast, not to temper their customary excesses, but rather that by postponement they may feel more immoderate greediness.[1]

At the same time it must not be supposed that the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries were fanatical zealots for a purely external observance, and were incapable of showing condescension towards the physical infirmity of many who earnestly desired to serve God.

The following passage of St. Chrysostom illustrates well the tolerant spirit which prevailed then as in all other ages among the true shepherds of Christ's flock :

If by reason of the weakness of thy body, thou canst not continue all the day fasting, no wise man will reprove thee for it : for we serve a gentle and merciful Lord, who expects nothing of us beyond our strength.

After remarking that it is only the lazy and dissolute, not those who cannot fast, who are blameworthy, the Saint continues :

Assuredly there are other and broader ways than that of abstinence, by which the doors of true freedom and confidence in God may be opened to us. He therefore, who takes some food, being unable to fast, let him give larger alms ; let him send up more fervent prayers, let him be more forward, and show greater alacrity, in hearing the word of God. In these things his bodily infirmity can be no hindrance to

1 *De Quad.*, 6, Sermon 210.

him. Let him be reconciled to his enemies, drive all remembrance of injuries out of his heart, and the like, and he hath kept the true fast which the Lord requires ; for He commands us to abstain from food for the sake of these things, and that we should check the wantonness of the flesh, and make it obedient and tractable to fulfil His commandments. . . . Wherefore I beseech you who can fast, that you extend still further this admirable and praiseworthy zeal of yours, for the more the outward man decays, the more your inward man is renewed and strengthened. Fasting brings the body under and bridles its ill-regulated concupiscences. It renders the soul also more clear and bright ; it gives it wings, and makes it light and ready to soar aloft. But as for you others, who through infirmity are unable to fast, . . . it is not he who eats and drinks moderately, but only he who is slothful, dissolute and sensual, who is unworthy to be present here. Following then the oracle of the Apostle, 'He that eateth, eateth to the Lord : and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks' ; in like manner, let him that fasteth give thanks to God, who gives him strength able to support the labour of fasting : and he that fasteth not, let him likewise give thanks that he is not thereby hindered from carrying out the work of his salvation, if only he earnestly will it.[1]

Not less completely removed from an undiscriminating formalism was Pope St. Leo in the West. While urging in the strongest terms the

[1] In Cap. I. Gen. Hom. X. (Migne, *P.G.* 53, p. 83).

duty of fasting, as a means of curbing the passions, he pointed out that such abstinence was a means and not an end. The object of fasting, he insisted, was to make the body apt for pure, holy, and spiritual activity. 'A man has true peace and liberty when the flesh is ruled by the judgment of the mind, and the mind is directed by the government of God.'[1] On the other hand, 'little is gained if the substance of the body is diminished, but the strength of the soul is not increased.'[2]

Together with our fasting the works of mercy must go hand in hand; and the principle he laid down was one reiterated again and again in slightly varying forms by the Christian writers of a later age. The *abstinentia jejunantis* must be the *refectio pauperis;*[3] what the faster denies his appetite, the poor man claims for his own. Fasting, he declared, without the works of mercy, is not a purification of the soul, but a mere affliction of the flesh.[4]

The true spirit of Christian abstinence could not be better expressed than in the words of the ancient hymn for Matins in Lent, *Ex more docti mystico*. How far the tradition which connects this with St. Gregory the Great may be trusted is uncertain, but the hymn undoubtedly belongs to an early redaction of the Roman Breviary,[5] and

1 *Sermones*, xxxix. 2; xlii. 2.
2 Ibid. xci. 2.
3 *Serm.* xiii.
4 Ibid. xv.
5 Bumer, *Geschichte des Breviers*, p. 258.

there is nothing positively to contradict the tradition of its authorship. Here at any rate are the most striking stanzas, as they stand in the translation of Father Caswall, the Oratorian—

Now with the slow revolving year
Again the fast we greet,
Which in its mystic circle moves
Of forty days complete.

* * * * *

Henceforth more sparing let us be
Of food, of words, of sleep;
Henceforth beneath a stricter guard
The roving senses keep.

And let us shun whatever things
Distract the careless heart,
And let us shut our souls against
The tyrant tempter's art.

And weep before the Judge and strive
His vengeance to appease,
Saying to Him with contrite voice
Upon our bended knees:

Much have we sinned, O Lord; and still
We sin each day we live;
Yet look in pity from on high,
And of Thy grace forgive.

Remember that we still are Thine,
Though of a fallen frame;
And take not from us in Thy wrath
The glory of Thy name.

Undo past evil; grant us, Lord,
More grace to do aright;
So may we now and ever find
Acceptance in Thy sight.

Seeing that this hymn is appointed to be said in the night office for every day in Lent, it is clear that the liturgy of the Church never loses sight of the need of a spirit of true compunction during this holy season.

We might probably say with substantial accuracy that during the first thousand years or more of the Church's history, the discipline of the lenten fast remained unchanged. The complete abstinence from flesh-meat, the postponement of the single meal until evening, the withholding of any mitigation in the shape of evening collation or morning *frustulum* are almost as strongly insisted upon in the eleventh century as in the time of St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. In one particular only can we trace any beginning of relaxation. Although the abstinence from wine as well as from meat had never been universally insisted upon, and although St. Benedict in his rule had permitted the use of wine to his monks on fast-days, still the earlier custom had prescribed that no drink of any kind should be permitted outside the one repast. It seems, however, that not long after his death a draught of water was allowed to be taken by special leave before Compline on fasting days outside of Lent, and at

the general chapter of Benedictine abbots at Aix-la-Chapelle in 817 a decree was passed which provided that 'If necessity shall require it on account of the severity of their labour, after the meal taken in the evening, even in Lent, before Compline, on days when the office of the dead is celebrated they are allowed to drink.'[1] This indulgence was permitted when they met to listen to the Conferences (*Collationes*) of the Abbot Cassian, and from this small beginning has developed our word *collation* in the sense of any light repast. The mitigation here spoken of was, of course, extended to the laity, or more probably had long been anticipated by them, but for many centuries afterwards there does not seem to have been any formal toleration of the taking of solid food outside the one lenten meal. It will be interesting, however, to set down here a portion of the instructions issued seemingly for the benefit of the laity by the Anglo-Saxon Abbot Ælfric about the year 1000.

The Lenten fast ought to be kept with very particular care, so that there be no day, except only the Sundays, on which any one may take any food before the tenth or the twelfth hour (4 o'clock to 6 o'clock), except any one who is so weak that he cannot fast, and young men, who are not of age, who may dispense with the fast; because these days are the tithing days of the year, and we should therefore solemnize them with all piety and holiness. It is a custom

[1] See Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year*, Lent, p. 8.

that people often, for love of friends, redeem other fasts with alms, but this may on no account be broken. At another time those who fast, earn with their fast a reward from God, and forgiveness of their sins, provided always, however, that they adorn the fast with alms; but now at this time, he who can fast and will not, without doubt, earns for himself everlasting punishment; because the Lord Himself, through Moses, and through Elias, and through Himself hallowed these days with holy fast.

It is daily needful for every man, that he gives his alms to poor men; but yet, when we fast, then ought we to give greater alms than on other days; because the meat and the drink which we should then use if we did not fast we ought to distribute to the poor; because if we fast, and reserve the morning repast for the evening refection, then is that no fast, but the hour of meat will be deferred, and the evening refection doubled.

It is the custom of many men when they fast that, as soon as they hear the none-bell,[1] they take to meat, but it cannot be allowed that that is a proper fast, but it is right that after none-song, mass be heard, and after the mass, even-song at the time (i.e. without an interval between), and after the even-song let every one give his alms, so far as his means will permit him, and after that, take to meat. But if any one be constrained by any occupation, so that he cannot come to the mass, nor to the even-song, then, at least, let him continue fasting, until he know that the mass

1 The none-bell, i.e. the bell for the office of none, would, presumably, have been rung at this period about 3 p.m.

and the even-song have been sung, and then, having thus completed his own prayers and his alms, let him enjoy his good things, and take refection.

At this tide there should be abstinence from all delicacies, and soberly and chastely we should live. If any one, at this holy tide, can forego cheese, and eggs, and fish, and wine, it is a very strict fast ; but for those who, from infirmity, or any other reasons, cannot forego them, it is needful that they enjoy them moderately, and at the times when they are allowed ; that is, after the even-song, and let him take neither wine, nor other drink for any drunkenness but for his heart's refection. Drunkenness from wine, and sinful lusts are forbidden, not milk, nor cheese.

The apostle said not, Eat neither cheese nor eggs, but he said, ' Do not overdrink yourselves with wine nor other drinks, in which be sinful pleasures.' [1]

It is clear that the writer did not regard the *lacticinia*, milk, butter, eggs, etc., as absolutely and strictly excluded by lenten observance in England at that date. This was a point as to which there was great diversity of usage. The Council of Trullo at the end of the seventh century had declared that in Lent, Christians throughout the world ' should abstain from all that can be

[1] They have been printed by Thorpe under the name of *Ecclesiastical Institutes*, as though they were laws formally promulgated by the episcopate of the Anglo-Saxon Church ; but there seems no adequate reason to attribute to them any sort of synodal authority. They are, in fact, simply translated from the *Capitularies* of Bishop Theodulf of Orleans, who wrote them about the year 795.

slain' (which would apparently include fish), and also from eggs and cheese. Moreover, a century earlier than this, St. Gregory, writing to Augustine in England, laid down the rule still enshrined in the *Corpus Juris:* 'We abstain from flesh-meat and from all things which come from flesh, as milk, cheese, and eggs.' It cannot, however, fail to occur to any one who reflects upon the matter, that while the chilly spring weather of Northern Europe would render the deprivation of all fatty foods a peculiarly severe hardship, no vegetable substitute such as the olive oil so universally employed as a principal article of diet in Italy and Spain, would be readily available in Great Britain. We need not be surprised, then, to find that exceptions to the rule about *lacticinia* seem to have been tolerated in this country from an early period. Nuts and fresh vegetables must always have been scarce, and so we learn from the Life of St. Cuthbert that in the Northumbrian Lent milk was taken without scruple, under which term we may also probably include both butter and cheese. In France the necessity was not so extreme, but from the tenth century dispensations or commutations for the eating of *lacticinia* began to be granted. St. Thomas Aquinas, himself writing in France, declared at a later date, 'Besides meat which is forbidden on all fast-days, the eating of eggs and *lacticinia*, or white meats, is prohibited in Lent'; but he implies that outside of Lent there

was a good deal of diversity regarding the eating of these same white meats; and he pronounces that in these matters 'every one ought to conform to the discipline of the Church where he lives.' By degrees the usage began to prevail more and more widely that the bishops should obtain faculties to dispense in the matter of white meats, and such dispensations were often granted in return for pecuniary alms contributed to some definite object. One of the steeples of Rouen Cathedral is, or was, commonly known as the 'butter tower' (*tour de beurre*), because it was built out of the contributions offered in exchange for leave to eat butter during Lent. Pope Innocent VIII, in 1489, granted special faculties for this purpose to the then Archbishop of Rouen. In Germany also the *Butterbriefe* played a conspicuous part in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and such dispensations, granted upon condition of a trifling alms to a specified object were a favourite means of raising money when it was wanted for pious purposes. In England we find that John de Burgo, the author of the most widely popular manual for parish priests known in this country, still, in the reign of Richard II, declared it to be the law that in Lent *lacticinia* were forbidden, though on fast-days outside of Lent, local usage, which differed in different places, might safely be followed.[1]

[1] *Pupilla Oculi*, Ed. 1510, fol. cxx. v°

With regard to the hour at which the fast may be broken De Burgo held that the proper time for the meal was the hour of none ; at the same time it was not necessary, he thought, to scrutinize the hour too narrowly, but a rough guess (*grossa estimacio*) might suffice, and if on account of bodily infirmity, or for some other reason, it would be gravely inconvenient to wait so long, such persons, De Burgo decided in accordance with the opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas, might be easily dispensed. To drink outside of meal-times, he also declared, was not forbidden, but this always supposes that it was done in moderation, and on account of thirst, not *in fraudem legis*, for the sake of nourishment, thus defeating the object of the fast. Moreover, *confectiones*, *electuaria* and *species*, which words in the fifteenth century *Ordinarye of Christen Men* are translated 'confectures and spices,' do not break the fast, provided they are used in moderation as medicines or stimulants, and not by way of food. De Burgo, among many other things, notes the injunction which is constantly found in the writings of holy men to the effect that he who fasts is also bound to give alms out of that which he saves from his own nourishment, but he goes on to explain that this is only a counsel of perfection, and is not of precept as part of the law of the Church.

It ought to be noticed in reference to what De Burgo says about the hour of breaking the fast, that in his time None had more or less come

to mean what it means with us, i.e. noon, and not three o'clock in the afternoon.[1]

This great change from evening until midday was no doubt a notable relaxation of severity, but it was very gradual, and the tradition of a solitary *evening* meal was still remembered even at the close of the fifteenth century. Thus, in the *Ordinarye of Christen Men* just quoted, we find a curious reason alleged for deferring the one daily meal in Lent until after Vespers. The fast of Lent, it is said, was instituted in imitation of the fast of our Blessed Lord. But He throughout the forty days took no food at all. This is impossible to us ; consequently, by a kind of legal fiction, the end of the ecclesiastical day is waited for before food is touched, so that the meal falls between the end of one day and the beginning of the next. In this way we also may be said to fast for the whole of forty days.

The gradual anticipation of the time for eating seems to have come about in this way. The ecclesiastical hours Sext, None, Vespers, etc., were, after all, periods, rather than points of time, None, the ninth hour extended from midday, which was strictly the end of Sext, until 3 p.m.[1] But immediately after midday the Office of None could legitimately be said. Hence though the ninth hour ended at three, and though *hora nona* commonly means 3 p.m., when, for example, we

[1] See Bilfinger, *Die Mittelalterlichen Horen und die Modernen Stunden*, p. 34, seq.

read of it in the Gospel in connexion with our Blessed Lord's cry of anguish upon the Cross, still the Office of None came to be said at midday, the earliest permissible moment, and has thereby given us our word *noon* in its present acceptation. The hour of the lenten repast has experienced the same transformation, only that this has happened in two successive stages. It was originally the after-Vespers meal; but for the lay folk, who did not always attend Vespers, it came by degrees to be taken at three, the moment that the period of None was over. Hence it was soon understood that the lenten meal was attached to None—the more so because None was the legitimate hour for dinner on fasting-days outside of Lent.[1]

From this it was a simple step to conclude that the meal might be taken even in Lent as soon as None could be lawfully said, i.e. at midday. And this is the usage which has come to prevail, in spite of many protests and admonitions on the part of the more fervent. Already in 1072 at the Council of Rouen the *hora nona* was authoritatively accepted as the time when food might be taken in Lent, and the custom was confirmed in the thirteenth century by St. Thomas Aquinas and other theologians. A little English devotional

1 The whole subject is very fully discussed by Bilfinger, in the work mentioned above. See especially his chapter iii. pp. 59–79. Cf. also an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, July 1899, on 'the Mediæval Sunday,' written before I had made acquaintance with Bilfinger's excellent volume, but propounding a view identical with his.

treatise of about A.D. 1200 may be quoted to show how this arrangement was practically taken for granted even in the days of King John. The writer is complaining of certain negligent Christians in these terms.

Of Fasting. When they shall fast at all, they fast scarcely all the hour of None, then after None they drink all the day and some still by night. They do not understand that it is as great a sin to break fasts by drinking after None without great need, as it is before None by eating without just as much need.[1]

On the other hand, if we may lay stress upon a rather rhetorical passage in one of St. Bernard's sermons, it would seem that only fifty years or so earlier than this the practice of deferring the meal until evening was still maintained even among the laity. 'Hitherto,' he says to his monks at the beginning of Lent, 'we have fasted alone until the hour of None, now all will fast with us until evening—kings and princes, clergy and people, nobility and plebeians, rich and poor in the same manner.'[2]

The chapter *Solent* extracted from the Capitularies of Theodulphus, Bishop of Orleans, in the 9th century still forms part of the text of the Canon Law.[3] It prescribes that the lenten meal

1 *Of Vices and Virtues*, E.E.T.S. (c. 1,200), p. 137.

2 Sermon ii., in Quadrages., No. 17.

3 Decretum Gratiani, Tertia Pars, *De Consecratione*, dist. i. cap. 50.

is not to be taken until after Vespers, Mass having previously been heard, and alms distributed to the poor. As we have already noticed, this injunction has left a curious survival of itself in the rubric which stands in the Roman breviary on the Saturday before the First Sunday in Lent to the following effect : ' On this day and henceforward Vespers are said before the repast both on festivals and ordinary days (*feriis*), always excepting Sundays.' But this rubric is now commonly observed not by deferring the meal until after the evening office, as was of course originally intended, but by anticipating the Vespers and saying them immediately before dinner at noon. This interpretation, however, seems to have been admitted almost without rebuke ever since the time of Durandus a S. Porciano in the middle of the 14th century.

Birds as Lenten Fare

It may have been noticed that in a passage quoted above from the Church historian, Socrates, he speaks of a practice prevalent in some parts of the world of eating birds during Lent as well as fish, because in the Mosaic narrative of the Creation they too sprang from the water. This may, perhaps, partly account for a custom in certain localities in virtue of which various aquatic birds are regarded as permissible lenten fare. But we must also probably trace this indulgence to a curious mediæval belief that a particular

kind of geese were hatched from eggs which grew on trees. It would be easy to collect a number of authorities of all nationalities down to comparatively recent times, who have expressed their belief in this fable, but it will be sufficient to cite the account of the Welshman, Gerald Barri (*Giraldus Cambrensis*), who wrote at the close of the twelfth century. Speaking of Ireland, he says :

There are in this place many birds which are called *Bernacæ :* nature produces them against nature in a most extraordinary way. They are like marsh-geese, but somewhat smaller. They are engendered from fir timber tossed along the sea, and are at first like gum. Afterwards they hang down by their beaks as if from a seaweed attached to the timber, surrounded by shells, in order to grow more freely. Having thus, in process of time, been clothed with a strong coat of feathers, they either fall into the water or fly freely away into the air. They derive their food and growth from the sap of the wood or the sea, by a secret and most wonderful process of alimentation. I have frequently, with my own eyes, seen more than a thousand of these small bodies of birds hanging down on the sea-shore from one piece of timber, enclosed in shells, and already formed. They do not breed and lay eggs, like other birds ; nor do they ever hatch any eggs ; nor do they seem to build nests in any corner of the earth. Hence bishops and clergymen in some parts of Ireland do not scruple to dine of these birds at the time of fasting, because they are not flesh, nor born of flesh. But these are

thus drawn into sin; for if a man during Lent had dined off a leg of Adam, our first parent, who was not born of flesh, surely we should not consider him innocent of having eaten what is flesh.[1]

The extraordinary fable here recounted by Giraldus was almost universally credited, but the majority of those who discussed the matter were more indulgent than he in their views regarding the abstinence question. The Jewish authorities were as interested as the Christians, though for different reasons. Rabbi Mordechai (c. 1359) asks whether these birds are fruit or fish or flesh; because it was important to know whether they were subject to the law which affected the killing of other kinds of meat. But, although he himself describes them as 'birds that grow on trees' he eventually decides, after much quoting of the opinions of Jewish doctors, that they ought to be killed in the same way as other wild-fowl. On the other hand it appears that Rabbi Isaac of Corbeil, in 1277, prohibited the eating of barnacle geese altogether because they were neither flesh nor fish.[2]

To return to the abstinence question, although it is certain that Blessed Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, Pope Pius II (*Æneas Sylvius*) and other writers less credulous than their contemporaries, declared that the whole story of the origin of the

[1] I borrow this translation from Max Müller's *Lectures on the Science of Language*, ii. p. 597.

[2] See Max Müller, *l.c.*, p. 593.

barnacle geese was a fable ; and, although we are informed by Vincent of Beauvais and Thomas of Cantimpré that in any case the eating of these birds on fasting days had been prohibited by Pope Innocent III, in the fourth council of Lateran,[1] the belief that they were not to be counted as flesh-meat, was very prevalent and was sanctioned in many places by local authority. The famous Jacobus de Vitriaco, who was himself a bishop, after asserting that the birds grew upon trees, states that their flesh was eaten in Flanders during Lent, and that the practice was so general that it excited no surprise of any kind. So in Trevisa's *Description of Britain*, as translated by Caxton, we read that 'Ther ben barnacles, fowles lyke to wylde ghees, whiche growen wonderly upon trees . . . Men of relygyon eat barnacles upon fastynge dayes because they ben not engendred with flesshe.'

It seems, on the whole, probable that this strange popular belief, dating back to the tenth century, must be held responsible for the practice, which has prevailed locally at different times, of regarding various other kinds of aquatic birds, like herons and moor-hens, or animals like beavers or otters, as permissible lenten fare. I do not know that any formal sanction can be

[1] I have not been able to find any justification for this statement; but Thomas of Cantimpré was a contemporary of Pope Innocent III, and is likely to have had some definite information to go upon.

quoted in its favour from the decrees of councils or synods.[1] But, on the other hand, long-standing custom does undoubtedly constitute a justification for such interpretations of the law, if authority has not intervened to condemn the abuse. With regard to such condemnation I can only say that there appears to be no more evidence of attempted repression than of approval. In any case the existence of the custom in certain localities seems to be well attested. Professor Max Müller writes, for instance—though he does not indicate his authority for the statement :—

'I am informed that in Brittany barnacle geese are still allowed to be eaten on Fridays, and that the Bishop of Ferns (in Ireland), may give permission to people, even though not belonging to his diocese, to eat these birds at his table.'

The Collation

We have already seen that from an early period the principle had been accepted that *bibere non frangit jejunium* (drinking does not break the fast), and that the Council of Aix had recognized the custom of allowing the monks, when the day's work had been exceptionally arduous, to quench their thirst before retiring to

[1] The only formal sanction of any kind I have seen quoted is a decree of the Congregation of Regular Discipline (Feb. 22, 1804), in virtue of which certain aquatic birds called *fulicæ*, apparently a kind of moor-hen, were allowed to be eaten by the religious of St. Francis of Paul, who otherwise abstain altogether from flesh. However, it has since been expressly declared that this decision is not to be interpreted as establishing a general law.

rest. This draught, which took place at the time that the brethren assembled to read aloud a *collation* from the works of Cassian, would seem in the course of ages to have been supplemented with a crust of bread or some similar morsel of solid food, on the plea that to drink without eating was prejudicial to health. Seeing that St. Thomas and other theologians conceded that the fast was not broken by the taking of 'electuaries,' comfits or spices, it is not surprising to find that this more solid addition to the evening *haustus* began at the close of the fourteenth century to be regarded as generally permissible. We find it recognized by the celebrated John Gerson about 1435; and since the fasting meal already at this period was taken soon after midday it is easy to understand that the pangs of hunger may very well have made themselves importunately felt before bedtime was reached. Out of this very informal concession to human infirmity, our present fasting-collation has developed by slow degrees. Very little can be said about its history, save that we may note a steady advance on the part of learned theologians in their willingness to countenance the indulgence. Of St. Charles Borromeo, for instance, at the end of the sixteenth century, we read that while he never allowed himself a collation of any kind on fasting days, he permitted those of his household to take in the evening an ounce and a half of bread and a cup of wine. Other contemporaries were

certainly more generous than this, but it is interesting to note that even in the middle of the eighteenth century the stricter school of theologians looked rather askance at the evening collation. The testimony of our own Alban Butler may not be unacceptable.

The allowance, he says, for collation on fasting-days was insensibly enlarged; but it must always be remembered, that though it is a little refreshment of the body after the fatigues of the day, it is not to be made a meal, or an indulgence of luxury and sensuality. As to the quality of things allowed for collation, this for a long time consisted only of a little dry bread, or a few dried fruits, without any preparation or dressing; and they are most to be commended who study to come nearest to this rule.

However, by general custom, a greater latitude is allowed in different countries. In many parts of the Low Countries, even butter, *in a small quantity*, is tolerated; also a little tart or fruit pie. In certain dioceses in France, though butter is forbidden, a very small slice of cheese is allowed to give relish to the bread. At Naples and in some other places, a very little quantity of small fishes, or at least of cold fish, is taken without scruple, though butter and cheese are on no account allowed even at dinner. In some places, little heed is given to the quality of the food at collation, provided it be strictly fasting-day diet, and in a very small quantity.[1]

[1] *The Moveable Feasts and Fasts and Annual Observances of the Catholic Church* (Ed. 1839), p. 153.

It must be remembered that at the period when this was written (probably before 1760) no practice had been generally introduced of permitting meat to be eaten on certain days during Lent. As our English catechism still reminds us, even the Sundays in Lent are abstinence-days unless leave be given to eat meat on them. Benedict XIV, however, at this period was making very vigorous efforts to resist the laxity creeping in through the general faculties for dispensation which the bishops had obtained or assumed; and even where dispensations were conceded, he insisted on two points: first, that the dispensation to eat meat or *lacticinia* on certain days during Lent was not to be extended to the collation taken on those days; and secondly, that meat and fish must never be served at the same meal. This latter restriction, it is needless to say, survives even to the present time.

Moreover, just as the evening draught of water or wine had introduced along with it a frugal collation, so there was now growing up a custom of taking a morning cup of coffee or chocolate, which also brought in its train a crust of bread *ne potus noceret.* The use of chocolate was in particular keenly debated, and though Pope Benedict XIV, in one of his official instructions,[1] allowed that it might rank as drink, still he

[1] Etenim gravissimi auctores, qui diebus jejunii chocolato locum esse tradiderunt eiusdem potationes iterare nullo modo posse fatentur. (Benedict XIV, Instruct., quoted by Kutschker, *Die heiligen Gebräuche*, p. 194.)

adopted the rather inconsistent position that such a draught was not to be repeated. I am strongly inclined to fancy that to this utterance may be traced the sort of informal sanction which is now universally extended to the cup of coffee or cocoa, with an ounce or two of bread, taken by fasters in the morning.

It may be interesting, in conclusion, to concede a few lines to the echoes of the chocolate controversy. This is what we read in the above-quoted work of our venerated Alban Butler :

In some places a small collation is taken also in the morning, though less than that of the evening ; but this in many parts, even in the West, is by no means allowed. Upon the principle that chocolate is mere drink, Cardinal Brancaccio wrote at Rome to maintain that it may be taken for a morning collation on fasting days, provided it be made thin, such as is given as a drink to slaves in America, which Cardinal Cozza afterward maintained. This many others condemn, alleging that chocolate is very nourishing and filling. Doctor Stabe doubts not to assure us that one ounce of the cocoa-nut (*sic*) is more nourishing to the human body than a pound of beef. Its effects are not the same in all constitutions. But this we must allow, that it is to be wished that the use of chocolate was not introduced ; and where it is used, t ought to be taken thin, or in a very small quantity, otherwise the fast may seem to degenerate into a law of bare abstinence. Cardinal Lambertini observes that Cozza, Brancaccio, and others who allow chocolate in the

morning, require that it should not be made too thick. nor be taken oftener in the day or in a large quantity.[1]

Despite the efforts of such men as Pope Benedict XIV, and Alban Butler to stem the tide of lax observance, I am afraid that human infirmity has gained the day. The law of fasting and abstinence weighs upon the faithful far more lightly now than it did in the eighteenth century; and there are but few who rise to the level of these very modest requirements. But even if we cannot observe the Church's law in this matter, we may hope to preserve that chastened spirit which finds apt expression in the words of *Lyra Liturgica*—

Our fasts are feasts, our burdens ease,
And light as air our penances;
Yet Thou our course dost cheer,
With soothing voice, and guiding star,
And words of promise, fitter far
For ancient days severe.

Lord, wilt Thou deign accept a Lent
Of love and prayer and pure intent,
In worthier penance' stead?
Our feeble frames, our corporal ills
That clog the plumage of our wills,
For mercy's judgment plead.

[1] *Moveable Feasts*, &c., p. 155.

CHAPTER II

Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday

The Lenten Shrift

Although Shrove Tuesday bears no liturgical character in the Roman Missal and Breviary, still the religious significance of the day is sufficiently indicated by the English name, which must certainly have come to us from Anglo-Saxon times. Shrove Tuesday means, of course, Confession-Tuesday. Even if we had nothing more than the name to go upon, we might feel reasonably confident that there was a time in this country when a general practice existed of making confession on the eve of the great lenten fast. That there was such a practice, admits, in fact, of no doubt, but it is curious how far back we have to travel in order to meet with any trace of it. The most recent testimony which I have so far discovered is that of a twelfth century English homily, printed by the early English Text Society :

Our soul is sorely wounded ; for every sin is the

soul's wound, and the priest is the physician of souls (*saulene leche*). Therefore, ought we to come to our priest ere we begin to fast and of him receive shrift, which we ought to keep all this lenten time in fasting and alms deeds, and in good prayers, vigils, unwashen garments, smart castigations, and in such other good deeds, according as each man prefers to repent of his foul sins.[1]

With this quite agrees an utterance of Abbot Ælfric about the year 1000, who says in the sermon for Quinquagesima Sunday: 'Now is a clean and holy tide drawing nigh, in which we should make amends for our heedlessness; let, therefore, every Christian man come unto his confessor and confess his secret guilt.'[2] It is not perhaps quite certain that even this represents any very general usage of Ælfric's time, for the Abbot was a great translator of earlier documents, and he avows in his preface that he had only rendered into English the Latin sermons of certain famous writers like St. Augustine, St. Gregory, Ven. Bede and others. But there can be no doubt

[1] This discourse, though only a fragment, is inserted in the MS. (B. 14. 52, belonging to Trinity College, Cambridge, written in the twelfth century), immediately before that which is entitled 'In capite jejunii.' It was therefore intended presumably for some occasion earlier than Ash Wednesday.

[2] *Homilies*, Ed. Thorpe, i. p. 164. Perhaps I might also appeal to the Sermon for Quinquagesima Sunday in the *Blickling Homilies* (E.E.T.S.) of the tenth century. Though it does not speak explicitly of confession on Shrove Tuesday, it is full of allusions to confession at this season. See pp. 19 and 25. The same might be said of the seventeenth sermon, attributed to Archbishop Wulfstan: *Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien*, p. 102.

that a few centuries earlier than this a great effort was made almost everywhere in the West to induce the laity to go to confession before the beginning of Lent. We have already quoted in the last chapter some portions of certain church ordinances which came to us in an Anglo-Saxon translation, probably by Ælfric (c. 1000), which must presumably have been intended for the instruction of the English laity of that age.[1] But, as already pointed out, these ordinances are really only a translation of the capitularies of Theodulphus, Bishop of Orleans (c. 795). We cannot therefore feel any great confidence in accepting them as evidence of what was done on Shrove Tuesday in England just before the Norman Conquest, still it is probable that all that is here prescribed was at least regarded as an ideal to which Christians were exhorted to conform; and whether it continued to the eleventh century or not, the practice of Charlemagne's time is none the less important in itself. According to this authority, then, the laity are instructed that

in the week immediately before Lent, every one shall go to his confessor[2] (*scrift*) and confess his deeds; and,

[1] Not only Ælfric, but Wulfstan and the author of the *Blickling Homilies*, constantly paraphrase these capitularies of Theodulphus.

[2] The ordinary Anglo-Saxon name for a parish was *scrift-scir*, i.e. confessor's district (see the many references given in the index to R. Schmid's *Gesetze der A. Sachsen*), and the right of the priest to hear the confessions of his own parishioners was undisputed. When

his confessor shall so shrive him as he then may hear by his deeds what he is to do. And he shall command all his parishioners, with God's command, that if any of them against any man have any enmity that he shall make peace with him; but if any one will not agree to that, then he may not shrive him, but then he shall acquaint the bishop, that he may turn him to right. If any one desire to be of God, then ought he to still every enmity and all strifes. And if any there shall be, who have any grudges against others, then shall they forgive them, that they may the more freely say in the Lord's prayer: 'Lord, forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us': and then with minds thus purified, let them enter on the tide of the holy fast, and by penance purify themselves against the holy Easter; because penance is like to a second baptism, and in baptism the sins before committed are forgiven; so also through penance the sins are purified, which we committed after baptism.

The reader will notice how the responsibility is thrown upon bishop and priest to answer for the moral conduct of their flock, the efficacy of their intervention being secured by the system of public penance, of which we shall have more to say further on. What follows in the Ordinance may seem perhaps to have only a remote

Ælfric therefore speaks of every one going 'to his own confessor' (*scrift*) he means his parish priest. To those who are at all familiar with the remains of Anglo-Saxon legal codes, it will seem to be a matter of no little perversity to contest the importance attached to confession by our Anglo-Saxon forefathers.

bearing upon confession at the beginning of Lent, but these ideas are so constantly repeated in the writers of the Anglo-Saxon period that it is desirable to reproduce the rest of this short instruction. The document continues, then, in these terms :

Holy writings inform us that sins are forgiven in seven ways : first, by baptism, which was given to us for forgiveness of sins ; and secondly by martyrdom, of which the psalmist said : ' Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin.' According to the saying of the same David, sins are forgiven through baptism, and covered over by penance, and are not reckoned through martyrdom. And thirdly, they are redeemed by alms, of which Daniel said to Nabuchodonosor the king : ' Redeem thy sins with alms, in mercy to the poor ' ; and that, ' As water extinguisheth fire, so alms extinguish sin.' And the Lord said in the Gospel : ' Give your alms, then may ye through that be pure.' Fourthly, if thou forgivest those who have sinned against thee, as it says in the gospel : ' Forgive, then shall ye be forgiven ; give, then shall it be given unto you.' And again : ' If ye forgive those who have sinned against you, then will your heavenly Father forgive you your sins.' Fifthly, if any one by instruction, and by preaching God's commandments, shall turn any one from his error to right ; as the apostle said : ' He who so doeth that the sinful man turn from his error to right, redeemeth his soul from death, and the multitude of his sins he covereth over.' Sixthly, through true

love of God and men, as it is said: 'The true love of God and men covereth over the multitude of sins, through the Saviour Christ our Lord. Seventhly, by penance, as David said: 'I am turned in my misery, then is my back broken.' As if he had said, as soon as I cease from my pride and my vices, and repent and do penance for them before God, so have I forgiveness.' [1]

To return to the Shrovetide Confession, two easily intelligible reasons may be assigned for selecting this special season as the time of shrift. In the first place there was undoubtedly a tendency in the early Middle Ages to regard Lent as a period which should be sanctified by frequent Communion. Although Venerable Bede might complain of the slackness of his contemporaries in approaching the holy table, this slackness does not seem to have been universal. It was less than a century after Bede's death that Bishop Theodulphus of Orleans recommended Communion on every Sunday during the fast,[2] an ordinance which Ælfric or some other translated into Anglo-Saxon nearly two hundred years later in the following terms:

Every Sunday, at this holy tide, people should go to housel, except those men who are excommuni-

[1] Thorpe's translation in the *Ancient Laws of England*, p. 485. folio edn.

[2] So also Rodulphus, Migne, *P.L.* 119, p. 718; Burchard, Migne. *P.L.* 140, p. 749; St. Ivo, Migne, *P.L.*, 161, p. 167, etc.

cated. So also on the Thursday before Easter, and on the Friday, and on Easter eve, and on Easter day; and all the days of the Easter week are with like piety to be celebrated.[1]

We are told of the Emperor Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, that during the last year of his life (840), having been compelled by political disturbances to neglect his wonted observance of Lent, he was constrained by mortal sickness to supply the omission, being unable to take food for forty days, but confessing and receiving daily the Holy Sacrament of the Altar.[2] Again, among the famous replies of Pope Nicholas I. to the Bulgarians in 866 occurs the following[3]: 'You enquire if you ought to receive the Communion of the Body and Blood of our Lord in Lent every day. We can only pray to Almighty God that this may be, and we most earnestly exhort you to it; provided always your hearts are not rooted in any affection to sin,' etc., and

1 Thorpe, *Ancient Laws of England*, p. 487. Archbishop Wulfstan, although he says nothing about Communion *during* Lent, agrees with Ælfric in assuming that his hearers will wish to receive the Blessed Sacrament thrice at its close, i.e. on Maundy Thursday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. By this time the practice of communicating on Good Friday, which is attested both by Theodulphus and Amalarius, must have fallen into desuetude. Wulfstan exhorts his hearers to penance 'that thu mage underfon that halige husel on thunresdæg æræstrum and eft on æsteræfen and on æsterdæg and sec thyne cyrcan ilome.' *Wulfstan. Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien*, ed. A. Napier, p. 290.

2 Migne, *P.L.* 104, p. 977.

3 Migne, *P.L.* 119, p. 983.

then after explaining the duty of repentance and forgiveness of injuries the pontiff continues :

Meantime it is only in Lent (*quadragesima*), which the custom of the Church calls *quadragesima major*, that, observing always the principles just laid down, you ought to communicate every day. Not but what we should at all times give ourselves to prayer, and throng together to assist at the sacrifices of the faithful.

It seems difficult not to conclude from this passage that the practice of daily Communion in Lent was at least encouraged in Rome in the time of Alfred the Great, even though it was not at all universally observed. And the further inference appears also to be warranted that the season of Shrovetide must have been marked by a very general recourse to confession, because nothing was then more insisted upon than the need of purifying the conscience before the reception of the Blessed Eucharist.

But there was also a second reason—and one of even wider application—for assigning the great annual confession to the day preceding the lenten fast. The severe penitential discipline of earlier ages was already in the eighth century beginning to be found unworkable in its more rigorous aspects.[1] This, as St. Boniface says

[1] See for instance the Capitula of Bishop Rodulphus of Bourges, Cap. 34 (Migne, *P. L.* 119, p. 720) ; Jonas, *De Institutione Laicali*, Bk. I. cap. 10 (Migne, *P. L.* 106, p. 138) ; and more fully the great

in his Statutes (cap. 31), was no reason for giving up the observance of the Canons altogether; and as a sort of compensation it would seem that ecclesiastical authorities turned to an observance of Lent which retained many of the outward features of the older and more drastic dispensation, but which terminated by the solemn reconciliation of nearly all the penitents on Maundy Thursday, thus allowing them to be admitted to the Easter Communion. The details of the subject are very complicated, and in spite of a large mass of documentary evidence the distinction between public and private penitents, the nature of the disabilities which they incurred, the duration of these penalties, and the precise effects of the Maundy Thursday reconciliation remain very obscurely known to us. But one feature which stands out clearly, is the fact that confession was enjoined upon the whole community at large, at the beginning of Lent or even before the beginning, in order that the priest might decide what penance those who belonged to his jurisdiction should be enjoined for the coming fasting tide. The Capitula of Bishop Rodulphus of Bourges (c. 850) although founded on those of Theodulphus of Orleans may be quoted as confirming independently what we have already learnt from the latter. Confessions must be made, says Rodulphus, 'one

work of Bishop H. J. Schmitz, *Die Bussbücher*, etc., ii. p. 26, seq., who appeals to the above quoted Statute of St. Boniface.

week before the beginning of Lent' (*una hebdomada ante initium quadragesimæ*) and penance must be assigned at the same time. 'The confession must extend to all the sins which the penitent has committed either by deed or thought.' It is obvious, therefore, that he is not speaking of notorious offenders merely, but of the faithful at large.[1] The penitent is to be questioned about the circumstances and nature of his sins, and a proportionate penance is to be assigned him.[2] Neither is this, adds Rodulphus, to be determined in accordance with the books called Penitentials, which are of no authority and ought to be abolished, but according to Scripture and according to the ancient canons and existing ecclesiastical customs. As to public penance, it

[1] The *Admonitio Synodalis*, a work of uncertain origin, portions of which may be as old as the sixth century, is explicit on the point: 'Feria quarta ante quadragesimam *plebem* ad confessionem invitate.' Migne, *P.L.* 136, p. 562. Cf. Dom G. Morin in the *Revue Bénédictine*, vol. ix. p. 99, seq.

[2] The *Admonitio Synodalis* just quoted says very clearly—the writer, a bishop, is addressing parish priests:—'De occultis peccatis penitentiam vos dare posse scitote; de publicis ad nos deferendum agnoscite.' Ib. p. 568. The same teaching may be found in an Anglo-Saxon homily for Maundy Thursday, attributed to Archbishop Wulfstan of York. After telling his hearers that bishops are in God's place and are bound to act upon the model of His dealing with Adam and Eve, the Archbishop continues:—'And gif hwylc man thonne godes lage swa swythe abrece thæt he hine sylfne *openlice* with God forwyrce mid healicre mǽdæde, thonne be thære bysene the God on Adame astealde tha tha he hine nydde ut of parad so, be thære bysene we eac nydath ut tha forsyngodan of godes cyrican.' No. xxxii. Kinard, *A Study of Wulfstan's Homilies*, doubts the genuineness of this discourse; but it is at any rate a document of the tenth or eleventh century, and written by a bishop.

must not be allowed to fall into desuetude, but it is not for the parish priest to impose it. Public offenders must be referred to the bishop, who alone possesses authority to excommunicate and reconcile.[1] Perhaps this warning as to the distinction between public and private penance was the more needed because the two undoubtedly had many features in common, and indeed the ritual for the two has sometimes been confused in our extant manuscripts. None the less the form for the annual private confession *was* something distinct from the rite used in the case of public offenders who were put out of the Church 'with pain and sorrow,' to be afterwards reconciled by the bishop.

Thanks mainly to the researches of Bishop Schmitz we now know exactly what the yearly private confession of Christians in the eighth century was like.[2] Here at least is a literal rendering of a form first used according to all probability in Rome itself, and afterwards widely spread throughout western Europe.

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[1] *Juxta modum facti debet ei pœnitentia indicari*, Migne, *P.L.* 119, p. 719.

[2] I do not by this mean to imply that Christians in the early Middle Ages went to Confession only once a year, but the documents seem to show that there was one specially formal confession which every good Christian was bound to make every year to his own proper priest at the beginning of Lent.

THE ORDER OF PRIVATE OR ANNUAL PENANCE IS THUS TO BE CARRIED OUT.

Every priest ought to forewarn those who are accustomed to confess to him, that at the head of the fast (*in capite jejunii*, i.e. Ash Wednesday) they should begin to come up to renew their confession. He must point out to each a fitting penance or practice (of piety) to be maintained until Maundy Thursday, notifying to them, and insisting greatly at the moment that they must on no account make light of the duty of hastening to the reconciliation on that day. But if some special reason interferes, as for instance a journey or other engagement, or if the penitent is perchance so stupid that the priest cannot make him understand, then let him enjoin him a penance both for Lent and for the year, and reconcile him (i.e. absolve him) straightway. And when the penitent shall have come to the priest, if he be a layman let him lay aside his staff, but in any case, whoever he is, whether layman, or clerk or monk, let him humbly bow before the priest. Then let the priest bid him seat himself over against him, and let him question him thus, saying :

' Believest thou in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ? '

Let the penitent reply : ' I do believe.'

' Believest thou that these three Persons of whom I just spoke are one God ? '

Let him answer : ' I do believe.'

' Believest thou that in this very flesh in which thou now art, thou art to rise again (*resurgere habes*)

and to receive either good or evil according as thou hast done ? '

Let him answer : ' I do believe.'

' Art thou willing to forgive all things to those who have sinned against thee, in order that God may pardon thee also all thy transgressions ? For He says Himself : " Unless ye forgive your fellow-men their offences, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your sins." '

If he be willing to forgive, then receive his confession, and appoint him a penance ; but if he will not, do not receive his confession.

He being willing, therefore, to forgive all things to those who have offended him, let him confess all his sins that he can remember. Which being done, planting his knees upon the ground, and supporting himself upright upon them, with his hands held out in supplication, looking upon the priest with a gentle and tearful countenance let him say these words :

' Many indeed and countless are my other sins which I cannot recall, both in deed, in word, and in thought, for all which my mind sadly misgives me and at times is tortured with bitter compunction. Therefore I earnestly ask thy counsel, or rather thy sentence, who art appointed as arbiter and intermediary between God and sinful man, and I humbly beg that thou wilt be intercessor for my sins.'

Which said, let him prostrate himself flat upon the ground and let him heave sighs and groans and tears, as God may give, from the bottom of his heart. Let the priest, however, suffer him to lie there prostrate for some little space according as he sees him moved

to compunction by the Divine grace (*inspiratione divina*). After which let the priest bid him rise. And when the penitent has risen to his feet, let him in fear and trembling await the sentence of the priest. And the priest must assign him some mortification, or pious practice, weighing accurately the quality of the person, the gravity of the fault, the intention of the mind, and the robustness or infirmity of his body. And when he has heard the priest's sentence let the penitent again prostrate himself at his feet, beseeching that prayer may be made for him that the Divine grace may afford him strength to observe steadfastly what has been enjoined him, and to obey the priest's sentence as dutifully as if he were to receive some apt medicine of salvation from the lips of Almighty God Himself.

Then is set down a long series of prayers to be recited over the penitent—the series indeed is so long, that it is difficult to regard them otherwise than as a collection, from which the priest might make his choice at will. Neither are these prayers uniformly given in the same number and order, in the various texts in which the ritual of private penance has been preserved to us. After which the form continues :

These prayers having been said, let the priest direct the penitent to rise from the ground, while he himself also rises from his stool (*ipse surgat de sedili suo*), and if time and place allow, entering the church together, and supported each of them on his knees or elbows, let them recite together the seven peniten-

tial psalms, with the little chapters and prayers belonging to them.

These psalms, &c., are hereupon set down in order, and they are followed by a special Mass (*Missa post Confessionem*), the prayers of which are so worded as to show that the Mass is said for a single person.

After the Post-Communion occurs the following rubric:

Here ashes are to be put on the head of the penitent with the words: 'Remember man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return.' And straightway he is to be clothed with a hair-shirt with the words: 'Afflict thy heart and humble thy soul in sackcloth and ashes; for a chastened heart God doth not despise.'

Then follows the prayer: '*Adsit quæsumus Domine*' &c.

After this he (the penitent) is to be expelled from the church and in this wise rebuked: 'Behold thou art cast forth to-day from the bosom of thy mother holy Church on account of thy sin, as Adam the first man was expelled from Paradise on account of his transgression.' Then follows: '*In sudore vultus tui*,' &c. (in the sweat of thy face, &c.).[1]

Now although this order for private penance suggests many difficulties, and though hardly

[1] Schmitz, *Die Bussbücher und das Kanonische Bussverfahren*, vol i. pp. 87–93; vol. ii. pp. 57–61. For the antiphon, *In sudore*, see further on, p. 91.

any extant manuscript contains the whole ceremony as I have translated it here, still there can be little doubt that Bishop Schmitz is right in regarding this as an authentic type, which was widely, almost universally followed, with slight variations, throughout western Europe. The form may be traced back with confidence to at least the latter half of the eighth century, and it is known to us from some four or five distinct manuscript sources of early date. One or two important points may be regarded as established beyond dispute by this Order for Private Penance. First, while resembling in certain features the Order for Public Penance, it is pointedly distinguished from it, not only by the fact that it is addressed to all Christians, who are to be admonished of the duty of making their confession at the beginning of Lent, but also by the absence here of any mention of the *bishop* whose special function it was both to expel and reconcile the public penitents. Secondly, there can be no doubt that the Order for Private Penance was in some sense preliminary to the other, and that if the priest by his questions, or by the avowal of the penitent, discovered that any open and scandalous crime had been committed he would be bound to require the penitent to go to the bishop and to do penance publicly in the mother church of the diocese. Thirdly, the text seems to make it perfectly clear that some form of absolution

(here called *reconciliatio*) was employed for private, as well as for public penitents. The actual reconciliation was possibly effected by the imposition of hands. It is not included in the form just translated because it was normally to be reserved until Maundy Thursday, but that this law admitted of exceptions is clear from what is said at the beginning of the form. Sick people, and those about to start on a long journey, or even the very ignorant, might admittedly be absolved at once, but it is also highly probable that there was a still larger class of exceptions, of whom it did not even occur to the compiler of the Form to make mention, because in his eyes they did not fall under the law.

And here let me explain, if it be allowable to express a private opinion, that in all probability much of the confusion which attends this difficult matter is due to the ambiguity of the word *pœnitentia* (penance).

We have become so much accustomed to regard confession and the sacrament of penance as synonymous that we are tempted to consider them to have been convertible terms also in the eighth and ninth centuries. Of this there seems no sufficient evidence. On the contrary, our texts suggest that while every Christian was expected to confess, both at other times and particularly at the beginning of Lent, it was not every Christian who was required to do formal penance. When the priest found from the

narration of the penitent's sins, that there was no grievous matter—as grievous matter was then estimated—to burden his conscience, in such case he sent him away rejoicing, and neither enjoined upon him any notable penance, nor required him to wait until Maundy Thursday for reconciliation. Whether any sort of absolution was given does not seem quite clear. Personally, I believe that the penitent was often left to the operation of one of those seven means of remitting sin which we have cited above from Ælfric's Anglo-Saxon adaptation of Theodulphus.[1]

There is in any case something decidedly significant in the distinction which the same writer is at pains to draw between venial sins

[1] It is true that Theodulphus (Migne, *P.L.* 105, p. 219) describing summarily the Order of Penance detailed above, declares that the priest, after hearing the penitent's sins, should say over him the seven penitential psalms, with the prayers which are found in the Sacramentary, and then 'absolve him in peace' (*absolvat eum in pace*), but it is also quite clear that this preliminary function of hearing the penitent's sins was sometimes committed to a deacon. See the peculiarly Roman Ordo printed by Schmitz from MS. Vallicell, D. 5 (*Bussbücher*, i. p. 88), 'Si autem necessitas evenerit et presbyter non fuerit præsens, diaconus suscipiat pœnitentes et det sacram communionem.' Now if the duty of the official who heard the shrift was limited to pronouncing upon the gravity of the matter presented in confession, there is no difficulty in supposing that a deacon, having decided that no grievous matter existed, might also administer Holy Communion to the penitent. If, on the other hand, he discovered that there *was* grievous matter, he imposed a course of penance, and the penitent was not absolved until he came with the rest before bishop or priest for the reconciliation on Maundy Thursday,

(*peccata minora*) and those requiring lengthy and formal penance. Some sins there are, he explains, which according to Isidore can be purged away in the fire of purgatory (*sunt aliqua peccata quæ igne purgatorio purgari possunt*). These sins, which do not entail spiritual death, are for instance, excess in eating or in drinking, in sleeping or in talking, backwardness in visiting the sick, in coming to church, in giving alms, drunkenness if not too often (*ebrietas si non frequenter*), sudden fits of anger which is not cherished in the heart. Other offences, he continues, which certain authorities reckon to be venial, are a false oath in a matter of no great consequence, if not too often repeated; a small theft; to strike a man, even if the blow draws blood; to cut off a man's limb provided death does not follow;[1] a small sacrilege, such as the stealing something of no great value from a church; to lend money with usury; to set fire to a house provided no great injury is involved; to cause other people to get drunk in making merry together—for such sins, Theodulphus suggests

1 'Truncare membrum homini ut non moriatur,' M. Cuissard, *Théodulfe Evêque d'Orléans*, supposes that in Theodulphus' idea, it was not more than a venial sin to chop off a man's arm or leg or nose, provided you did not kill him. The words may undoubtedly bear that interpretation, and in strictly correct Latinity ought to mean nothing else, but I cannot help doubting whether Theodulphus is not referring to the act of a surgeon who cuts off a limb in order to save life. Such maiming, like involuntary or justifiable homicide, was, I believe, always regarded as an irregularity needing expiation even in a lay person.

that a cleric in minor orders should be made to do two weeks' penance, a priest five weeks, and an ordinary layman one week. I am inclined to think that, provided the penitent's accusation did not contain anything more serious than these lesser sins, he would not have been regarded as falling strictly under the law of penance, nor have been required to wait until Maundy Thursday for reconciliation. His case would have been dealt with summarily and he would have been admitted without scruple to the weekly lenten Communion recommended by Theodulphus, or even to the daily Communion contemplated by Pope Nicholas I. The Order of Private Penance was not, strictly speaking, meant for such an offender. But for those who confessed more grievous sins than these, the priest who received their confession at the beginning of Lent, enjoined on them *vera pœnitentia* and it was for him to decide if this should be public or private. In the former case the penitent had to travel to the Cathedral Church of the diocese, to appear in public wearing a garb of sackcloth, and to be expelled from the church before the eyes of all, after which he seems most commonly in the early centuries to have been kept in a kind of prison for the whole period of Lent, until, if he were deemed worthy, he was reconciled by the Bishop upon Maundy Thursday, and allowed to make his Communion at Easter. Those, on the other hand, whose crimes had not been public, did private penance

according to the form which we have been considering. They were indeed expelled from the church, sprinkled with ashes, and kept waiting for absolution until Maundy Thursday, but the exclusion from church was only a private and symbolical one, and the penance imposed was such as might be hidden from the eyes of the members of their own family. No disgrace attended this form of penance, for it was very general, and certain outward marks, for instance the reception of ashes, were voluntarily assumed for devotion's sake even by those who had, strictly speaking, no need to do so.

Apart from other considerations the wide acceptance of the name Shere Thursday, if I may anticipate for the moment, seems also to afford evidence of the prevalence of some form of penitential discipline which was quite distinct from that of the relatively small number of sinners reconciled by the Bishop in his cathedral church. Shere Thursday, i.e. Maundy Thursday, has indeed nothing to do with shearing, as was often erroneously supposed. It does not consequently mean the day on which the penitents were shaven and shorn. But it does mean 'the cleansing day,' [1] and the popular

[1] It seems to be of Norse origin, and there is not, so far as I know, any trace of its use in England during Anglo-Saxon times. But in Icelandic and the allied northern tongues Maundy Thursday was always known as *Skir-dagr* or *Skiri-thorsdagr*. *Skir* is the root of a verb which means to cleanse or wash.

understanding of that meaning seems to point to something more than either the ordinary 'Maundy,' the washing of the feet of twelve poor men, or again, the washing of the altars. There can at any rate be no doubt that from the time of St. Augustine onwards, this Thursday was associated with the idea of personal purification, not only in a moral, but in a material sense. Thus in a letter of St. Augustine to Januarius, the Saint suggests that the practice of dining before Communion on this one day in the year, which was, of course, general in the early Church, had simply arisen from the fact that it was almost everywhere the custom to wash on that day,[1] and that the arduous and exhausting labour of

[1] It must be admitted that the rule of bathing on Maundy Thursday itself was not universal. On the one hand we find Æthelwold, in the *Concordia Regularis*, prescribing that on Good Friday 'after the kissing of the cross is over, the ministers and the children, if they are free, may shave and bathe, supposing that the community is so numerous that next day, on Holy Saturday morning, there would not be time enough.' (Migne, *P. L.* 137, 493). On the other hand, Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, directed that the monks were to shave on the Tuesday and bathe on the Wednesday (*Martene*, Bk. iii. c. 3). William, in the *Constitutions of Hirsaug*, observes: 'It is customary for men, after shaving, to go immediately to take a bath, but on the subject of baths there is no need for much legislation. There are two occasions in the year when all who wish may bathe, and that without special permission, to wit, before Christmas and before Easter. At other times any one who bathes must obtain permission.' (Hergott, *Constitutiones Hirsaugienses* in *Discip. Mon.*, Bk. ii. c. 40). From St. Isidore of Seville it would seem that in Spain the washing of the head alone was allowed, and that upon Palm Sunday, which was called for that reason *capitilavium*. At the same time the term was also applied to Maundy Thursday, at least occasionally.

washing away the accumulated grime of Lent rendered it impossible for people on such an occasion to fast until the late evening (*quia jejunia simul et lavacra tolerare non possunt*), 'because,' says Augustine, 'they cannot support fasting and washing at the same time.'

Whereupon he continues:

However, if you ask me how it was that the custom of washing on this day first began, I can think of nothing more likely than this, viz. that it would greatly offend the senses if the bodies of those about to be baptized, begrimed as they are with the austerities of Lent (*per observationem quadragesimæ sordidata*) were presented at the font without being previously washed on some day or other. The day which was chosen in preference to the rest was that upon which we celebrate the annual commemoration of the Supper of our Lord. And because this indulgence was granted to those about to receive Baptism, other people wished to bathe at the same time as these catechumens did, and consequently on this day to remit the fast.[1]

There are so many grounds for dispensation recognized now, which would certainly not have been listened to in ancient times, that it is a consolation to find one motive at least accepted then, which would hardly be pleaded in the present day. However, if the physical exhaustion

[1] Migne, *P.L.* 33, p. 204.

of bathing was then conceived to be inconsistent with the observance of the fast, we are probably to infer, as other evidence abundantly suggests, that during all the time the fast had lasted, the penitent had as rigorously abstained from the use of the bath as from other forms of physical indulgence. This conception of the incompatibility of fasting and washing seems to have lasted on during the greater part of the Middle Ages, certainly for public and perhaps even for private penitents. Amalarius, in his notes upon the Antiphonary, seems clearly to refer to a similar practice, and for the later Middle Ages we may appeal to the *Liber Festivalis* of good John Myrc. After speaking of the Maundy on the Thursday in Holy Week, he adds :

It is also in English called Shere Thursday, for in old fathers' days, the people would that day shear their hair, and clip their beard, and so make themselves honest against Easter Day, for on Good Friday they do their bodies no ease, but suffer penance in mind of Him that that day suffered His Passion for all mankind. On Easter Eve they might not, what for the long service, and what for other occupations that they had for the week coming, and after None was no time, for holiday (i.e. on account of the holy day of Easter which followed). Then, as John Belet saith, on Shere Thursday a man should do poll his hair, and clip his beard, and a priest should shave his crown, so that there nothing be between God and him ; . . . and they should pare their nails of

hands and feet, and shrive them, and make them clean within their soul as without.

Penitential Ashes

Even a very superficial study of the documents preserved to us regarding the penitents of the eighth and following centuries, must make it abundantly clear, first, that the systems of public and private penance were very closely related, and, secondly, that the whole state of society hinged in a remarkable way upon the clergy and the moral influence which they exercised over those committed to their charge. In this the practice of confession undoubtedly counted for a good deal. As the Penitentials and the almost countless scraps of documents on this subject in our extant Anglo-Saxon manuscripts show, there probably never was a period in history when so much thought and time was given to the accusation of sins in confession. It was, be it remembered, a state of society in which religion had not a little to do with the maintenance of public order, in which the tribunal of penance took upon itself something of the functions of a court of correction, in which the average law-breaker was much more afraid of the parish priest than of the parish constable, and in which all but the most desperate were willing, in view of the terrors of judgment after death, to take upon them in this life the duty of making atonement to God and their fellow-men. There is no

need to dwell upon this theme, but it is important to draw attention to the consequences of such a state of things. Where nowadays a man would undergo a term of penal servitude after trial and conviction, in Anglo-Saxon times he performed public penance for two years or five years, or seven years, as the case might be. Where he would now be sentenced by a magistrate to a week's hard labour, he was then recommended—and it seems clear that public opinion supported the recommendation pretty effectually—to join the lenten penitents from Ash Wednesday until Easter.

The severity of the penance as to diet, &c., seems to have largely depended upon the judgment of the confessor. He submitted the case to the bishop, if, and in so far as, the facts were public. If the sin was secret, the whole matter rested between himself and his penitent. But where public scandal had been given, the penitent was sent to the cathedral church of the diocese; the bishop pronounced sentence, acting no doubt largely upon the confessor's advice, and after the expulsion service of Ash Wednesday, it would seem that in many cases the penitent was incarcerated in a monastery, or some other place of confinement, at least until the end of Lent. Sometimes it happened that the gravity of the offence was such that the law-breaker was bidden to make a pilgrimage to Rome, and to sue for pardon from the Holy See, as the fountain-head

of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In this case he came back with a papal brief, in which the Pope prescribed the manner of the penance to be inflicted, and instructed the bishop, after what interval, and upon what terms, the offender might be again admitted into the communion of the faithful. Copies of documents of this kind are still in existence, and they often prescribe minutely the nature of the penance. Thus, for instance, in one such brief directed to Archbishop Wulfstan of York, by Pope John XVIII (1003–1009), instructions are given that the bearer, who had been guilty of fratricide and other crimes, is to do penance for all the rest of his life, and never to receive Communion except at the approach of death. On the Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week, he is to fast on bread and water; he is only to enter the church on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday, and only to eat meat on Sundays and the principal feasts. On all fast-days he is to wear no linen, and to go barefoot. He is never to receive the *pax*, and may only 'cut his hair,' under which term was also probably included washing, three times in the year. But apart from papal cases it may be interesting to give in full a form of episcopal penance, c. A.D. 1000, taken from the same Cambridge manuscript.

A penance of five or seven years, is now imposed by us upon thee. And in this first year thou must lay

aside thy weapons, and thou must not approach to receive communion. When the people assemble in church thou must hear the solemn office of the Mass only at the church door.

If, however, the people are not present in church, thou mayst enter the church with a priest and pray.

Thou must live continently apart from thy wife and keep thee pure from all uncleanness.

During the whole of this year thou must eat no flesh save on Sundays and from Christmas to Epiphany, and at Easter, and Pentecost, and the Ascension, or the feasts of our Blessed Lady and the XII Apostles and St. John Baptist, and of the saints whose remains are interred in this diocese (*parochia*).

On three days in the week, i.e. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, thou must drink no wine, on the other three days drink sparely if thou drinkest at all.

Thou must also feed one poor man every day by giving of thy own sustenance. And if ever thou eatest or drinkest, beware that thou exceed not by intemperance or satiety.

With regard to the bathing of thy body and the clipping of thy hair, this must be left to the discretion of the priest.

If, however, thou shalt have supported this discipline gladly for this one year, in future with God's grace thou shalt be judged more mildly.[1]

The public penance exemplified in this episcopal sentence can be traced back to primitive times, and it is not improbable that in the so-called

[1] From MS. C.C.C.C. 265. *Eng. Hist. Review*, 1895, p. 727.

Gelasian Sacramentary we have evidence that the inauguration of this kind of external discipline was already connected with Ash Wednesday as early as the fifth or sixth century. Under the heading, 'Order for those who do public Penance.' we there find this concise direction :

> You take him in the morning of the Wednesday at the head of Lent, and you cover him with sack-cloth ; you pray for him and you shut him up until Maundy Thursday.

Although there is here no explicit reference to ashes, we can hardly doubt that the use of ashes was implied in the mention of the sack-cloth, and it is certain that the custom for Christian penitents to sprinkle their heads with ashes was older than the rubric quoted. The use of ashes as a sign of mourning and repentance is, of course, of Old Testament authority, as may be seen, for instance, in this well known passage of the Prophecy of Jonas : 'And the men of Ninive believed in God, and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sack-cloth, from the greatest to the least. And the word came to the King of Ninive : and he rose up out of his throne, and cast away his robe from him, and was clothed in sack-cloth and sat in ashes.'[1]

The use of ashes is probably closely connected with the idea of prostration, of biting the

[1] Jonas iii. 5, 6 ; cf. Jeremias vi. 26 ; xxv. 34.

dust, of the hair and beard not only humbled to the earth, but trampled upon and defiled. Tertullian in his *De Pœnitentia* counts it among the external marks of penance. He speaks of the reluctance of the imperfect and slothful to face the bodily discomforts of repentance, that they should have to go 'unwashed and dust-stained, that they must live without joy in the roughness of sack-cloth and the squalor of ashes, and with the ungratified palate which fasting imposes.'[1] So a sermon ascribed to St. Maximus of Turin in the fifth century speaks of 'the blessed ashes placed upon our heads at the beginning of Lent, that we may be mindful of our first beginning and last end'; and if the authenticity of this homily is perhaps doubtful, St. Isidore of Seville beyond all question, when referring to penitents in general describes them as 'sprinkled with ashes.'[2]

The Order for the 'Expulsion of Public Penitents from the Church on Ash Wednesday,' which still stands in the *Pontificale Romanum*, is substantially identical with that which we can prove to have been used twelve hundred years ago. The penitents who had to do public penance for scandalous crimes were bidden to present themselves in the cathedral church on the

[1] *De Pœnitentia*, ch. 10.

[2] Hi vero qui penitentiam agunt in cilicio prosternuntur, cinere asperguntur, vel ut sint memores quia cinis et pulvis sunt, vel quia pulvis, i.e. impii facti sunt. *De Officiis Eccles.* ii. 16.

morning of Ash Wednesday in mean apparel, with bare feet, and with their eyes cast down to earth. A list was then prepared of their names and offences, and the bishop's penitentiary assigned a definite term of penance to each. On the coming of the bishop ashes were blessed, and he then seated himself outside the choir. There-

EXPULSION OF THE PENITENTS
(from the Giunta Pontifical of 1520).

upon the penitents, who had in the meantime been waiting at the church door, bearing lighted candles in their hands, were summoned by name, and after prostrating themselves, received ashes from the arch-priest in due order with the words :

Remember man that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return. Therefore do penance, that thou mayst have eternal life.

Then the candles were extinguished, and the

bishop, after blessing their hair-shirts, knelt at his faldstool, the penitents meanwhile prostrating themselves. The whole assembly repeated the Seven Penitential Psalms, and the Litany of the Saints, and at the close the bishop said four short prayers, which may be found in the Pontifical of Archbishop Egbert (eighth century), and in the Gelasian Sacramentary, just as they appear in the Roman Pontifical of to-day. Then the bishop 'makes them an address' (*facit sermonem*), showing them how Adam for his sins was cast out of Paradise and how many evils came upon him thereafter, and how they, after the like pattern, are to be cast out of the church for a time. After which he took one of the penitents by the right hand and led him towards the church door, the penitents all following behind with lighted candles, each similarly leading his neighbour by the hand. Then when they are put out of the building, the Bishop is directed to say with tears (*cum lacrimis*) :

Behold ye are cast out to-day from the precincts of holy mother Church on account of your sins and crimes, as Adam the first man was cast out of Paradise on account of his transgression.

And therewith the choir intones this responsory :—

The Lord said unto Adam : In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread ; when thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her

fruits. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.

Verse. Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree which I commanded thee, saying: Thou shalt not eat of it,—cursed is the ground whereon thou shalt labour.

Answer. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.[1]

Or again, echoing this time the bitter irony of the holy writer: [2]

Behold, Adam is become as One of Us, to know good and evil. See lest he take of the tree of life and live for ever.

Verse. Unto Adam also did the Lord God make a coat of skins, and clothed him and said:

Answer. See lest he take of the tree of life and live for ever.

After this the penitents knelt down outside, sighing and groaning, their faces turned towards the church door, while the bishop, standing on the threshold, admonished them afresh that they should not despair of God's forgiveness, but should give themselves to fasting, prayer, pilgrimages, almsgiving and other works of mercy, in order that God might bring them to the worthy fruits of penance. He reminded them, moreover, to return on Maundy Thursday for recon-

[1] From Genesis iii. 19; iv. 12. The responsory occurs in the Roman Breviary on the Monday after Septuagesima.

[2] Genesis iii. 22. This is the responsory for the eighth Lesson on Septuagesima Sunday.

ciliation, but bade them not presume to enter the church before they were re-admitted. Then the procession formed again and the bishop went back to the choir to celebrate Mass, while the doors of the church, as the rubric directs, were solemnly shut in the penitents' faces.

Might it not be well for some of us, in these days of easy shrift and light penance, if we had some similar expiation to face, which would bring home to us the fact, that by our sins we have deserved

to be banished from paradise and from the House of God? The sturdy Christians of an earlier age at any rate thought that there was much to be learnt by such humiliation, and as we have seen, they devised a discipline of private penance closely analogous to that enforced upon the public penitents. Moreover, it would appear that even those whose lives were free from more grievous transgressions sought to be partakers in the initiatory ceremony of the sprinkling with ashes,

although they neither needed nor attended the formal reconciliation of the penitents on Maundy Thursday. It was in this way that the ceremony of the ashes, accompanied for the most part with a penitential procession in which the English uses prescribed the carrying of a 'sack-cloth banner' (*vexillum cilicinum*), came to be practised in every parish church. The ashes, which are nowadays directed to be made out of the blessed palms of the preceding year, were and are solemnly hallowed for this special function. Four prayers are used for the purpose, all of which are ancient, but the first in particular deserves notice, both on account of its contents, and also because of its relation to an entirely different ritual. The prayer I refer to runs as follows:—

Omnipotent and Eternal God, spare the penitent, be gracious to those supplicating Thee, and vouchsafe to send Thy holy angel from heaven, who shall bless and sanctify these ashes, that they may be a salutary remedy to all humbly imploring Thy holy Name, and accusing themselves under the consciousness of their faults, and bewailing before the Divine mercy their crimes, or humbly and earnestly demanding Thy most tender pity: and grant through the invocation of Thy most Holy Name, that whatever persons may be sprinkled with them, may find them efficacious for the redeeming of their sins, the healing of their body, and the protection of their soul. Through Christ our Lord. *R.* Amen.

No one, I think, who considers the terms of

this prayer, can fail to draw the inference that it was originally intended for its present use. The references to the penitent, to self-accusation, to the sprinkling with ashes, to the redeeming of sins, are unmistakable. And yet we find this identical prayer assigned in the Pontifical of Archbishop Egbert of York (presumably of the eighth century) for the blessing of the ashes in the rite of the dedication of a church. Obviously the prayer was violently dragged in here—and it stands in the same position in the *Pontificale Romanum* to this day—regardless of its special significance. It was felt that some prayer was wanted to bless the ashes which were mixed with the salt and water, and this form was already familiar even in the eighth century. It would be difficult to obtain more convincing evidence of its high antiquity. Again the reference to bodily health may be noticed, as if an almost medicinal effect were ascribed to the ashes. It may, however, be that attention is rather meant to be directed to the salutary effects of the fasting with which the ashes are associated, for in the secret of the Saturday Mass before the First Sunday in Lent there is a reference to 'this solemn fast which is wholesomely instituted to cure our souls and bodies.' This is a theme upon which good Alban Butler expatiates with singular gusto, and the curious reader may be referred to him to learn the remarkable virtue of abstemiousness in promoting longevity. Thus he observes:

Neither is it beneath the consideration of the Church in this holy institution to have a regard to the motive of our corporal health. As extreme temperance and abstemiousness are its best guardians, so is fasting often its safest and most easy restorer. By it so many ancient Fathers of the desert, whose austere and perpetual fasts astonish and almost affright us, maintained a constant, vigorous health and prolonged their lives for a whole century . . . Usually a fast of one or two days has the full effect of a course of physic, and does the work in a much safer and more effectual manner. Many persons within the circle of my acquaintance, chiefly amongst those who led the most exactly regular lives in religious convents, have attained to a very advanced old age, without having ever made use of any apothecary's drugs, or consulted any physician, having made it their rule whenever they found themselves indisposed, to fast one, two, or three days, till they found their health re-established.[1]

It would perhaps be a little dangerous to model oneself too completely upon the illustrious examples of abstemiousness that Alban Butler cites, as for instance, Servio Cornaro, 'who brought himself to take only twelve ounces of food in a day; by which he was so perfectly freed from all his complaints that it seemed to his physicians almost a miracle.' Still it is likely enough that the abstinence symbolized by the penitential ashes would be less prejudicial to

[1] *Feasts and Fasts* (Ed. 1839), pp. 141, seq.

our bodily health than many of us are inclined to suppose.

A second very interesting prayer in the Blessing of the Ashes is that which follows—

O God Who dost not desire the death, but the repentance of sinners, look benignantly on the frailty of our human condition; and those ashes which in token of humility, and for the obtaining of pardon, we have placed upon our heads, deign to bless with Thy goodness, that we who know ourselves to be ashes, and on account of our depravity shall return to dust, may mercifully be held to deserve both the pardon of all our sins, and the rewards promised to the penitent. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer, though it does not appear in the early Roman Sacramentaries, is nevertheless very ancient and certainly was known in the tenth century.[1] It again emphasizes the idea of the connexion of the ashes with human frailty and with penance, and the same thoughts recur in the two other prayers which immediately follow. It must not be forgotten that outside the orders for public and private penance, we find the sprinkling with ashes usually associated in earlier times with some sort of penitential procession,

[1] The prayer may be found in the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (of Jumiéges ?), which was seemingly written about the year 990. Dr. Wickham Legg must be mistaken when he declares (Westminster Missal, iii. p. 1509) that this prayer is also found in the Stowe Missal. The *Deus qui non vis mortem*, which occurs in the last named collection, is quite a different prayer from this over the ashes.

and that in the Rogation processions ashes were commonly blessed and sprinkled upon those who took part in them. In all probability the custom was adopted by the faithful at large, in imitation of the practice of the monks. For them it seems to have been in full force in the English Benedictine monasteries of the tenth century. St. Æthelwold of Winchester in his *Concordia Regularis* prescribes that 'on the Wednesday at the beginning of the fast, after None has been sung, the abbot wearing his stole is to bless the ashes and to put them upon the heads of all who are present,'[1] and the writer goes on to remark that both in the Old and in the New Testament we read that penitents sprinkled themselves with ashes to show that this human flesh of ours would return again to dust.

But the practice of receiving the ashes soon became general, though in the beginning it was probably only a counsel of devotion.[2] Dom Guéranger informs us that this voluntary assumption of the character of a penitent was even added to, and that 'as early as the twelfth century the Pope himself on this day, when passing from the church of St. Anastasia to that of St. Sabina, at which the 'Station' was held, went the whole distance barefoot, as also did the cardinals who

1 Kitchin, *Winchester Obedientiary Rolls*. p. 181.

2 De Vert, *Cérémonies*, cites an *Ordo* of Nevers which prescribes that the Bishop is to give ashes to the penitents and to those who wish to receive them out of devotion.

accompanied him.' The significance of the whole ceremony is accentuated when we learn that it was from the hands of the Grand Penitentiary that the Roman Pontiff received the ashes.

Of the public penitents we shall have to speak again. For the moment, I will only say that although the importance attached to this external discipline continually declined, it lasted in England down to the Reformation, and the tradition of it was handed on to the Anglican Church of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As a specimen of its exercise in the time of Edward I, I may note an entry in the register of Bishop Quivil of Exeter (March 10, 1282–3) which records how Joanna Baschet at Paignton, Devonshire, who had become the mother of an illegitimate child, begotten in adultery, was bidden to stand outside the church door on every Sunday and festival throughout Lent, until Maundy Thursday, 'and also to come to Exeter on that day to be reconciled with the other penitents in the cathedral church, as the custom is'; with regard to whom the bishop admonished the chaplain of Bideford that he should compel her, if necessary, to perform the said penance.[1]

The Lenten Curtain

Further, with this gradual neglect of the old canonical discipline and the introduction in its place of a voluntary profession of penance

[1] Bishop Quivil's Register. Ed. Hingeston Randolph, p. 314.

among all the faithful may perhaps be connected an institution, known in Germany by the name of the 'Hunger Cloth,' in France and England by that of the 'Lenten Veil' or 'Curtain.' Just as all good Christian folk, by the reception of ashes, were in a sense converted into penitents, so the exclusion from the church which was part of that discipline was represented by a sort of legal fiction, through which those who stood outside of the veil suspended across the chancel arch were regarded as being figuratively outside of the church. Whatever may have been the origin of this custom it is certain that in mediæval churches in this country and elsewhere the sanctuary was veiled off from the faithful during Lent, and the veil remained in position until the words were read in the Passion on Wednesday in Holy Week, *Et velum templi scissum est*.[1] It seems probable that the veiling of crosses and pictures in Passiontide is a modification of this usage. First, this veiling

[1] The directions regarding the Lenten veils in the Sarum Consuetudinary are of a very elaborate kind (see *The Use of Sarum*, ed. W. H. Frere, i. pp. 138–140). It is mentioned that all the images and relics and even the receptacle containing the Blessed Sacrament (*vas etiam continens eucharistiam*) are to be veiled from Prime on the first Monday in Lent until Matins on Easter Monday. With regard to the principal veil which hung from the chancel arch it seems from the second redaction of the Sarum Customary, compiled towards the close of the thirteenth century, that a practice was then newly introduced of always lifting the veil for a few moments during the elevation of the Mass, in order that the Sacred Host might be seen by the people (in elevacione sacrum altaris velum extollitur et viso sacramento statim demittitur).

was interpreted by the rubricians as a sign of mourning, as undoubtedly it is; then it was conceived to attach to the person of our Blessed Lord; and lastly inasmuch as the Gospel on Passion Sunday uses the words 'Jesus fled away and hid Himself from them,' the veiling of the images, etc., has now become attached to that day. In certain ceremonials it is expressly provided that at these words in the Gospel, the crosses, etc., should be veiled.

In England our parish registers and inventories swarm with entries of all kinds referring to these lenten cloths, which, as Mr. St. John Hope has clearly shown,[1] were generally white in colour. Even as early as the tenth century we find distinct mention of the shrouding of 'crosses and relics' during Lent, as well as of 'the veil which hung between the sanctuary and the people.'[2] As

[1] MS. 190 C.C.C.C. 'In lxxa Cruces atque reliquiæ occultantur usque pascha.' Ælfric says 'In xla. reliquiæ et cruces occultantur et velamen inter sancta sanctorum et populum ponitur, quia absurdum putamus crucem adorare dum alleluia relinquimus.' Kitchin, *Winchester Obedientiary Rolls*, p. 182. These entries alone suffice to show how woefully wrong is Magani when he asserts positively that no trace of the covering of images is to be found before the twelfth or thirteenth century. See *L'Antica Liturgia Romana*, ii. 203.

[2] *Transactions of St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society*, vol. ii. p. 453. In this valuable paper on *English Liturgical Colours*, Mr. St. John Hope says: 'Most of the modern ritual manuals and kindred works speak of ash-colour as being of frequent use in England, probably for Lent. Where this idea originated I do not know, no such colour is mentioned in any of the pontifical or service books': and he adds that in the very few cases where such a colour is spoken of in inventories it must be taken as equivalent to white. It is

for the reason of this veiling there is an interesting discussion on the subject in *Dives and Pauper*.

Dives. Why be images covered in Lent from man's sight ?

Pauper. In token that while men be in deadly sin, they may not see God's face, nor saints in heaven. And in token that God and all the court of heaven hide their face from man and woman while they be in deadly sin, till the time that they will amend them by sorrow of heart and shrift and satisfaction.

Dives. Why be they more hid in Lent than in other times ?

Pauper. The time of Lent betokeneth the time of Adam's sin, for the which we lost the sight of God's face, and God and the court of heaven hid their faces from mankind, unto the time of Christ's Passion. And in token thereof on Dominica in Septuagesima, when Holy Church beginneth to make mind of Adam's sin, she leaveth songs of mirth, as Gloria in Excelsis, Te Deum, and Alleluia. For through the sin of Adam, our joy was turned into sorrow and woe.

Dives. I hold it well done to hide images in Lent, to let (i.e. hinder) men from idolatry.[1]

The statement that at Septuagesima 'Holy Church beginneth to make mind of Adam's sin,'

strange that though the official utterances seem to prescribe violet, red or black as the colour for Lent vestments, use, as revealed by the inventories, seems universally to have sanctioned white linen as the material for curtains, altar coverings, and even for chasubles at that season. Crosses, however, of violet or red were often sewed on to the linen.

1 *Dives and Pauper.* Printed Text, *Precept* i. Ch. 10.

refers to the lessons of the Breviary; for at that season the first chapters of the Book of Genesis are read daily in the Divine Office. When therefore we also recall the terms in which both public and private penitents were excluded from the church, and bidden to meditate upon the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise, it may seem that the suggestion of the author of *Dives and Pauper* was not altogether without foundation.

The most important and costly of these lenten cloths was that called the *Velum Quadragesimale*, the lenten curtain *par excellence*. It hung in ordinary parish churches between the chancel and the nave, but in cathedrals it shrouded the sanctuary only, and the canons or monks in choir sat outside the curtain. It was expressly laid down that the duty of providing such a curtain belonged to the parishioners.[1] On the festivals which occurred during Lent the curtain was lifted up or drawn back, and also during that portion of the Mass which intervenes between the Gospel and the *Orate Fratres*. An English provincial constitution required that the confessions of women were to be heard outside the Lenten veil,[2] for in those days confessionals did not exist, and the extreme publicity thus given to the intercourse between penitent and confessor was considered to be the best safeguard to decorum.

The shrouding of statues, relics, pictures, and

[1] Wilkins, *Concilia*, ii. 49.
[2] *Ib.* i. 689.

other objects of piety was, as we have seen, equally of early date, and while probably designed like the lenten veil to suggest man's state of exile and degradation, the hiding of God's face, and the mourning incumbent on penitents, it also, of course, served to heighten by contrast the joyous solemnity of the paschal season. The reformer Becon in some of his earlier and less scurrilous writings declares that these statues, etc., were covered :

To stir the people to repentance, that they might be found worthy against Easter, i.e., against the time of passing and going out of this world, clearly to behold and openly to see in the kingdom of heaven the shining face of God and His Saints.

It would seem, however, that these curtains and coverings themselves were not unfrequently of precious materials and were ornamented with pictorial devices suggestive of death, judgment, and the Passion of Christ. Thus Becon goes on :

To declare the mourning and lamentation of sinners for their ungodly manners, the cloths that are hanged up in church have painted on them nothing else but the pains, torments, passion, bloodshedding, and death of Christ, that the mind should be fixed only on the Passion of Christ.[1]

The same conclusion is suggested by the satire of Naogeorgus ; I quote first a portion of his description of the Lent abstinence.

[1] *Early Writings*. Parker Soc., 1843.

In forty days they neither milk, nor flesh, nor eggs
do eat,
And butter with their lips to touch is thought a
trespass great :
Both ling and salt fish they devour, and fish of every
sort,
Whose purse is full, and such as live in great and
wealthy port :
But onions, brown bread, leeks and salt, must poor
men daily gnaw,
And fry their oaten cakes in oil. The Pope devised
this law
For sins, the offending people here from hell and
death to pull,
Believing not that all their sins, were erst forgiven
full.
Yet here the woeful souls he helps, and taking money
fast,
Doth all things set at liberty, both eggs and flesh at
last.
The images and pictures now are covered secretly,
In every Church, and from the beams, the roof and
rafters high,
Hang painted linen cloths that to the people doth
declare,
The wrath and fury great of God, and times that
fasted are.

QUARANTINES

Lastly, before we quit this subject of the lenten penance, I may note that we sometimes see in

our prayer books that a particular devotion has attached to it an indulgence of, let us say, seven years and seven quarantines. Why, we may have been tempted to ask, seven quarantines? We should think it a curious thing if a judge sentenced a prisoner to be imprisoned with hard labour for two years and two fortnights, and this measure of time seems almost as unreasonable. The explanation, I think, is simply this; that the quarantine or Lent (we may remember that the French for Lent is *carême* = quarantaine) was a period, as we have seen, of exceptionally severe penance, imposed as an aggravation of other general deprivations. A public penitent was in some respects excluded from the Church all the year through, but in Lent he had in addition to this, to fast on bread and water on certain days, to wear hair cloth, etc. That a magistrate should sentence a prisoner to a year's imprisonment with a month's hard labour, is a very intelligible sentence. The month is not an addition to but only an aggravation of the year; and this I think was at least the original meaning of the seven years and seven quarantines. The remission of this penalty originally constituted the indulgence, although I must not be understood to mean that that is all that is meant by an indulgence now. On the other hand, as the bishop ordinarily enjoyed the right to impose the penance of a Lent on those who had given scandal, he also enjoyed the right of dispensing from it, and that perhaps

over and above the restrictions of the Holy See, is one of the reasons why a bishop when he grants an indulgence ordinarily grants one of forty days.

In the Middle Ages the voluntary performance of a quarantine (*carena*), i.e. a Lent of public penance, seems to have been encouraged as an act of devotion. It is hardly to be identified with the public penance of the earlier centuries; first, because it seems to have been entirely optional; secondly, because it was apparently carried on in every parish church quite independently of the Bishop; and, thirdly, because it lasted for forty days, and forty days only. But the severity of the penance seems to have been extreme, and one can quite understand how a term of forty days spent under such regulations must have been regarded as a great aggravation of the normal fast and the normal exclusion from church offices. Two forms for imposing such a quarantine may be found printed in a recent work on the Liturgy of Augsburg. I quote a portion of one of these. The manuscript from which it is taken is of the fourteenth century. It is headed *Ordo ad recipiendam carrenam* (Order for receiving a quarantine).

When any sinner wishes to receive a quarantine for his sins, let him go to church with his feet bare, and when the priest comes to him the penitent must lay down his cloak and stick at his feet, and the priest must say, for the crime committed—

'Behold this day thou art cast forth from the face of thy mother Holy Church, as Adam was driven from Paradise, and thou must be a wanderer and a fugitive. No man shall have intercourse with thee. Thou must go barefoot. Thy food must be bread mixed with ashes. Let no man taste of thy food, but the remnants shall be thrown to the dogs. Thou shalt make a pit in the earth, and from this take thy food and not from a table or anything of the kind. On the road thou mayest not use any conveyance nor any prop to support thee. Thou shalt not travel by the highways or footpaths. Thou must not speak on the way. Thou shalt not sleep upon feathers, nor enter a church, nor take holy water. Without the priest's leave thou shalt not remain in any lodging as long as the quarantine lasts. Thou must neither sell nor buy anything nor transact business. Thou shalt not ask leave for anything, save only such things as thou canst not do without, because thy body absolutely requires them. All that is superfluous, or luxurious, soft and delicate, thou must avoid in work and in word and in bodily food and drink, in sleep and play and merrymaking.'

Note well that these instructions must be faithfully proclaimed to the penitents by the parish priest from the pulpit or in the church porch. And the penitents on being asked must reply that they are willing to observe all that they have heard. Then the priest is to do mercy upon the penitents, and while they lie prostrate on the ground he is to say: '*In sudore vultus tui*,' etc.

After this the priest is directed to strike the

RECONCILIATION OF A PENITENT.
(*From the 'Giunta Pontifical' of* 1520.)

penitents upon the back with a rod and to read over them a form of absolution. The last feature is noteworthy, and especially the fact that it did not interfere with the use of a further ceremonial and form of absolution when the quarantine was completed and the penitents were once more admitted to enter the church.[1]

[1] Hoeynck, *Liturgie des Bisthums Augsburg*, p. 415.

CHAPTER III

The Quarant' Ore

The Carnival

The famous Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador to the Sultan, in speaking of the Carnival, tells rather a good story at the expense of his own fellow-Christians. A certain Turk, he averred, who visited Europe upon a diplomatic mission reported on his return to the East that at one season of the year the Christians go raving mad, but that they are restored to their senses by a kind of ashes, which are sprinkled upon them by the priests in their temples. He added that it was a marvellous thing to see the beneficial effects of this medicine[1]; a remark which won the full approval of his hearers, for while they knew many things which deprived a man of his reason they had hitherto failed to

[1] Busbecq. *Letters*, translated by Forster and Daniell, vol. i. p. 290. It is quaint to find this story quoted in a stately Latin Encyclical issued by Pope Benedict XIV in 1748, against the excesses of the carnival. See his text in Nilles, *Calendarium*, ii. 69.

discover any remedy which restored it when it was lost. In charging his countrymen with behaving like madmen at Shrovetide, Busbecq would certainly have been borne out by the Protestant satirists of his age. The author of *The Popish Kingdom*, quoted a few pages back, devotes many tedious lines to describing the excesses of the merry-makers at Carnival time.

Now when at length the pleasant time of Shrovetide comes in place,
And cruel fasting days at hand approach with solemn grace,
Then old and young are both as mad as guests at Bacchus' feast,
And four days long they tipple square and feed and never rest.

* * * * *

Some run about the streets arrayed like monks and some like kings,
Accompanied with pomp and guard and other stately things;
Some others make a man all stuffed with straw or rags within,
Apparelèd in doublet fine and hosen passing trim;
Whom, as a man, that lately died, of honest life and fame,
In blanket hid they bear about, and straightways with the same
They hurl him up into the air, not suffering him to fall,
And this they do at divers times the city over all.

And e'en till midnight hold they on their feasting for
to make,
Whereby they hinder men of sleep and cause their
heads to ache.

This is, of course, only a tame picture of the wild licence and extravagant diversions with which for many hundred years past, throughout nearly all Europe, the season of penitence has been ushered in.

This feast is named the Carnival, which, being
Interpreted, implies 'farewell to flesh';
So-called because the name and thing agreeing,
Through Lent they live on fish both salt and fresh;
But why they usher Lent with so much glee in
Is more than I can tell, although I guess:
'Tis as we take a glass with friends at parting
In the stage-coach or packet, just at starting.[1]

It can hardly need saying that much of the merriment of the Carnival-tide was far from innocent. The wild excesses of this season have been continually thundered against by preachers and moral reformers, from the days of St. Bernardine of Siena unto our own. Who will ever forget the strange descriptions which have been left us of Savonarola's reformed carnival, with its processions, its sacred dance, its bonfire of vanities?

'These fresh-cheeked troops of children,' writes

[1] Lord Byron, *Beppo*.

the author of *Romola*, in strict accord with history, 'were to be the chief agents in the regenerated merriment of the new Carnival, which was a sort of sacred parody of the old. Had there been bonfires in the old time? There was to be a bonfire now, consuming impurity from off the earth. Had there been symbolic processions? There were to be processions now, but the symbols were to be white robes and red crosses and olive wreaths—emblems of peace and innocent gladness—and the banners and images held aloft were to tell the triumphs of goodness. Had there been dancing in a ring under the open sky of the Piazza, to the sound of choral voices chanting love songs? There was to be dancing in a ring now, but the dancing of monks and laity in fraternal love and divine joy, and the music was to be the music of hymns. As for the collections from the street passengers, they were to be greater than ever—not for gross and superfluous suppers, but for the benefit of the hungry and needy; and, besides, there was to be the collecting of the *Anathema*, or the vanities to be laid on the great pyramidal bonfire.'[1]

The idea of atonement which, through Savonarola's influence, assumed this rather fantastic guise in the Florentine carnival of 1497, took a different form under other conditions of time and locality. I am inclined to think that the expiatory forty hours' Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, which was carried out on such a

[1] *Romola*, chapter xlix.

grand scale during the carnival at Rome in the seventeenth century,[1] and which is still observed there and in countless other cities at this season, must be looked upon as one of the most powerful influences in popularizing the *Quarant' Ore*. But there is in this matter a certain amount of confusion, not only regarding the history of the devotion, but about the meaning of the term itself. This confusion we must try to clear up.

The Quarant' Ore a Prayer for Peace

To the majority of educated Catholics, who either live in our large towns or who are in the habit of spending some portion of the year abroad, the ordinary form of this devotion is sufficiently familiar. The *Quarant' Ore* is a forty hours' prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. Like the period, extending more or less over forty hours, during which our Lord's Sacred Body remained in the Sepulchre,[2] the

[1] This was especially the case in the Church of the Gesù; and a number of little printed booklets are preserved containing elaborate descriptions of the artistic *teatro*, a symbolical presentment of some incident in Sacred History, which served as a kind of *mise en scène*. Into this the Blessed Sacrament upon its gorgeously decorated throne was introduced as the central feature which gave life and meaning to the whole.

[2] St. Augustine writes: *Ab hora mortis usque ad diluculum resurrectionis horæ sunt quadraginta ut etiam hora nona connumeretur. De Trinit.* Bk. iv. c. 6. It was this consideration which seems to have been mainly kept in view at Milan in deciding upon the period of forty hours. Elsewhere, however, we hear of this limit being fixed in honour of our Lord's fast of forty days.

time is so arranged as to include part of three separate days. It is opened on the first day by a Solemn Mass *de Sanctissimo Sacramento*, celebrated at the high altar of the church in which the Blessed Sacrament is to remain enthroned. On the second day, while the Exposition is still continued uninterruptedly in the place of honour, the *Missa pro Pace* (Mass for Peace), is sung at one of the side altars in violet vestments without *Gloria* or *Credo*. On the third morning the Blessed Sacrament is solemnly restored to the tabernacle at the conclusion of the Mass 'of Deposition,' as it is called, and the Forty Hours Prayer for this particular church is at an end, but only to recommence at the same hour in some other parish. This in turn is succeeded by a third, the third by a fourth, and so on, in such a way that during the whole of the lenten season, or, as in Rome and Milan and other great Catholic cities, during the whole course of the year, the Blessed Sacrament is being continuously venerated in one or other of the numerous churches. It is obvious that the Exposition is intended to continue during the night. Without this neither the central idea of unceasing supplication, nor even the requisite number of hours of prayer, from which the devotion obtains its name, would be secured. None the less a modification of this condition has in course of time come to be tolerated in those places in which it is practically impossible that the night-watching can be carried out; and

even before the existence of any special rescript, Benedict XIV[1] assumed that the Indulgences attached to the *Quarant' Ore* were not forfeit by the omission. At the close of the High Mass on the first and last days of the devotion, the Blessed Sacrament is carried round the church in procession, and on returning to the altar the Litanies of the Saints and special prayers are chanted according to a form determined in the Instruction of Clement XII. Many other provisions are contained in this important liturgical document,[2] which regulate details of less serious moment, but the more prominent features of the *Quarant' Ore* are sufficiently indicated in what has been said.

There can be no doubt that the primary object originally contemplated in the institution of the Forty Hours' Prayer was the preservation of the peace of Christendom. The point is one of so much interest that the reader, I think, will not be displeased if I here translate part of the Constitution *Graves et diuturnæ* of Pope Clement VIII, by which this devotion was first formally organized at Rome, to be carried on continuously throughout the year in the different churches of the Holy City. It must be fully conceded,

[1] Constitution *Accepimus*. Bullarium, vol. ii. No. 5.

[2] It has been made the subject of elaborate commentaries by Cavalieri, *Opera*, vol. iv., and by Gardellini in his *Appendix ad Decreta Authentica Cong. SS. Rituum*, reprinted by Mühlbauer, *Decreta . . . Ordine Alphabetico Concinnata*.

as will be seen later, that the *Quarant' Ore* was known even in Rome long before November 25, 1592, the date at which this document was issued. But the Constitution *Graves et diuturnæ* marks the epoch at which the practice of it, having been sanctioned for and enjoined upon all the churches and public oratories of the City without exception in a very solemn way, henceforward belongs in some sense to Catholic ritual. Now in 1592 the internal dissensions by which France had so long been distracted in the wars of the League, were by no means at an end, and the Duke of Parma, at the head of a Spanish army, was in acute conflict with the new King of France, Henry of Navarre. It was an evil day for the Church when the two sovereigns, who should have been her staunchest champions, were flying at each other's throats, and when the attitude of the Protestants on one side and of the Turks on the other, at every moment became more menacing. There is therefore little of exaggeration in the language in which the Pope invites his faithful children within his own diocese, to continue their supplications without intermission, that the anger of God may be appeased.

The long and terrible calamities [says the Pontiff], which on account of the sins of men, become every day more grievous throughout the whole Christian world, afflict Our pastoral solicitude for the Church of God both with deep sorrow for the evils which now weigh upon us, and with anxious dread of perils

yet to come. But most of all Our fatherly bosom is torn by the deplorable state of that most illustrious, and once most flourishing, kingdom of France, which now for so many years past has been agitated by grievous civil disturbances, and by every extremity of evil fortune. The conflagration of heresy spreads daily further and further, the enemies of Holy Church, animated with a common fury—the heretics on one side, the Turks upon the other—grow more and more menacing, so that it is patent to all that human means are unavailing to resist these manifold disasters. Our labour is wasted, and Our efforts powerless, unless We be strengthened by the aid of heavenly grace; and that that grace may not be withheld, We must have recourse to prayer . . . It is, as the Fathers call it, the key of Heaven—when prayer goes up, the mercy of God rains down, and it rains down the more readily and the more copiously, the greater the multitude of faithful and devout souls that make unceasing supplication in one unanimous spirit of charity. Wherefore . . . We have decreed . . . to establish publicly in this Mother City of Rome (*in hac alma Urbe*) an uninterrupted course of prayer in such wise that in the different churches [he specifies the various categories], on appointed days, there be observed the pious and salutary devotion of the Forty Hours, with such an arrangement of churches and times, that at every hour of the day and the night, the whole year round, the incense of prayer shall ascend without intermission before the face of the Lord.

In consequence, We earnestly exhort you all [it

will be remembered that the Constitution is addressed to the Roman people], whom We embrace with peculiar affection as being in an especial way Our own children, to engage yourselves piously and diligently in this most useful and necessary practice of prayer. We are all of us poor and in sore need of the Divine grace; God is the Author and the Bestower of all good things; without Him we can gain no good, without Him we can avoid no evil. Ask therefore and ye shall receive, knock and it will be opened unto you. Pray for the Holy Catholic Church, that the mists of error may be scattered and the truth of the one Faith may be diffused throughout the world. Pray that sinners may enter into themselves, that they may not be overwhelmed in the stormy ocean of their crimes, but may be saved from drowning by the plank[1] of Penance. Pray for the peace and unity of kings and all Christians. Pray for the sorely-stricken kingdom of France, that He who is the Lord of all princes and whose will nothing can resist, may restore to this most Christian kingdom, which has rendered so many services to the Christian cause, the piety and tranquillity which once distinguished it. Pray that the enemies of our Faith, the dreaded (*teterrimi*) Turks who, in the heat of their presumptuous fury, threaten slavery and devastation to all Christendom, may be crushed by the right hand of the Almighty

[1] A reference to the language of the Council of Trent by which the Sacrament of Penance is described, in the words of St. Jerome, as *secunda tabula post naufragium*—'a second plank after shipwreck.'

God. Pray lastly for Ourselves, that God may sustain our weaknesses so that We faint not under such a burthen, but may grant Us to be of service to His people by word and example, that together with the flock entrusted to Us, all unworthy as We are, We may attain eternal life, through the sprinkling of the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb which We offer upon the altar, and lift up before the Eternal Father, that He may look upon the face of His Anointed and spare us sinners.

The Holy Father then proceeds to grant a Plenary Indulgence to all who after Confession and Communion pray in any church where the *Quarant' Ore* is being kept, for at least the space of an hour, and for those who spend a less time an Indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines.[1]

It is worthy of notice that although the Pontiff is most explicit about the prayer being continuous and without any intermission night or day, he does not say a single word about the Blessed Sacrament being exposed. Cardinal Lambertini (Benedict XIV)[2] seems even to doubt whether this really was intended, though he refers to the Life of St. Philip Neri for evidence that the practice of keeping up continuous prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed was familiar in Rome as early as 1550 amongst the members of the Confraternity of the Holy Trinity for Pil-

[1] The Constitution is dated November 25, 1592. Cf. Kutschker, *Die heiligen Gebräuche*, vol. i. p. 73.

[2] *Institutiones*, n. 30.

grims, which St. Philip had founded, and had been adopted by other Roman Confraternities, e.g., by that called the *Sodalitas Orationis scu Mortis*, in the time of Pius IV, who approved this form of devotion as a part of the religious exercises of the sodality in question.[1] The evidence, indeed, which later research[2] has adduced in favour of the essential and original connexion of solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with the Prayer of the Forty-Hours, is so clear and abundant that we may venture to appeal to the Constitution *Graves et diuturnæ* of Clement VIII as a striking example of the danger of presumptions founded merely upon the silence of one or two authorities. The explanation of the omission probably lies in the fact that Exposition was so much taken for granted in any *continuous* public prayer, especially when bearing the name *Quarant' Ore*,[3] that it did not occur to the Pontiff to prescribe it in set terms.

[1] St. Pius V, according to his biographer Novaes, had recourse to the devotion of the *Quarant' Ore* in 1566, when he was trying to form a coalition against the Turks. He took a most conspicuous personal share in the performance of the exercises, and the victory of his arms was announced shortly afterwards.

[2] See e.g. Gardellini, *op. cit.* pp. 2–4; Moroni, *Dizionario*, vol. lvi. p. 114, etc.

[3] The casual reference made to it in the official *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* (Bk. i, ch. 12) is noteworthy. 'Si aliquando contingeret coram Episcopo, vel per ipsum Episcopum celebrari, existente Smo Sacramento super Altari . . . vel cum exponitur Oratio quadraginta horarum.' But I cannot ascertain when the mention of the *Quarant' Ore* was inserted. It does not belong to the original text published in the year 1600. I have before me a copy printed at Venice in the September of that year.

Origin of the Quarant' Ore

However this may be, it is now universally recognized that although the Constitution *Graves et diuturnæ* must always be regarded as the foundation charter, so to speak, by which the *Quarant' Ore* was solemnly approved for the Church at large, it did not institute or originate this form of prayer in any one of its features, but adopted the idea from outside. It is to Milan, the city of St. Ambrose, that all accounts, even when in other respects conflicting, refer the origin of the Forty Hours. That it existed there in full vigour before the year 1540 is attested on the irrefragable evidence of contemporary records preserved in the archiepiscopal archives, which Canon Aristide Sala has printed in his *Documenti*.[1] How it came to be introduced is not so certain. By some authorities[2] Saint Antonio Maria Zaccaria, founder of the Clerks Regular of St. Paul (the Barnabites), is said to have conceived the first idea of this practice; others[3] name a Spanish Dominican, Friar Thomas Nieto, who preached in the Duomo of Milan in 1529; others again, among whom may be counted Pope Benedict XIV, advocate the claims of Padre Giuseppe da Ferno, a Capuchin famous

[1] *Documenti circa la Vita e le Geste di S. Carlo Borromeo* (4 vols.) and *Biografia di S. Carlo Borromeo.* (1 vol.)

[2] Mazzucchelli, *Osservazione sul Rito Ambrosiano*, p. 234.

[3] Burigozzo, *Cronica Milanese.*

for his eloquence in the pulpit during the civil troubles of 1537.

It seems, however, that the first suggestion of a forty hours' prayer is certainly older than any of these incidents. A writer in the *Voce della Verità* has printed some rather remarkable suggestions concerning the antiquity of this form of devotion. The source of his information is, perhaps, open to suspicion, and I have not been able to test the evidence as I should wish, but the statement bears a certain verisimilitude upon the face of it, and it is borne out to some extent by other facts of which we have more certain knowledge. The article referred to [1] informs us that from the beginning of the thirteenth century, and indeed, as the writer believes, from the middle of the century preceding, a forty hours' prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed has been practised in the city of Zara in Dalmatia.[2] It is alleged that a Papal document was formerly in existence, attested by Lampridio, the first Archbishop of that see (1154–1179), conceding this with other privileges to the confraternity of the 'Verberati,' a pious association which met on certain days to take the discipline in common.

[1] *Voce della Verità*, Nov. 26 and 27, 1892; G. F. Capilli, *I Francescani del terz' Ordine regolare ed il loro convento di Zara.*

[2] Zara (in Latin commonly written *Jadera*) is a town on the north-eastern shore of the Adriatic somewhat north of Spalato. It was formerly a dependency of Venice and is now in Austrian territory. Zara was erected into an archiepiscopal see about the year 1154.

As to the authenticity of this document, it will probably be wise to express no opinion, at any rate until supported by more satisfactory evidence ; but we may feel less difficulty about certain early wills the terms of which are rather vague, and which do not explicitly make mention of the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Thus it appears that in 1214 a legacy of 'ten livres'[1] (*decem librarum*) was bequeathed to the fraternity of *Verberati* belonging to the little Church of St. Silvester, to be spent upon the prayer of forty hours during the Passiontide (*in diebus passionis Jesu Christi*). According to another such bequest dated 1270, a vineyard was left 'to defray the expenses of the prayer of forty hours in Holy Week (*hebdomada dolorosa*) in the Chapel of St. Silvester beside the wall of the citadel.' A more detailed notice still is found in an entry in the diary of one Paolo di Paoli about a century later (March 22, 1380). He records that 'upon the evening of Maundy Thursday, a popular disturbance broke out in the little square in front of the Chapel of St. Silvester, belonging to the confraternity of the *Verberati*, just before the public prayer of the Forty Hours. I, with the other two magistrates of the city of Zara, put an end to

[1] I prefer the word *livres*, as avoiding the misleading associations which would be suggested by either *pounds* or *lire*. All this expenditure seems to suggest the use of candles and decorations, and hence probably Exposition. The date, 1214, I am bound to say, looks suspicious. The discipline-taking confraternities belong to a somewhat later epoch in the thirteenth century.

the disturbance and restored tranquillity at the first summons, so that even this year also the prayer took place in due form, being distributed according to ancient custom among different persons from hour to hour and lasting until Gloria Saturday at noon.'[1] It appears from this account that the prayer was maintained from Maundy Thursday evening until midday on the Saturday, which would probably be about the hour when at this period the Mass of Holy Saturday was wont to be sung. I say at this period, for, as we shall have occasion to see later on, in the earlier centuries the blessing of the Paschal candle and of the font, and all the other ceremonies terminating in solemn Mass, belonged strictly to Easter *eve* (*hac sacratissima nocte*). This evidence, as the reader will readily perceive, goes to show that in its first conception the 'Forty Hours' Prayer,' was nothing more than a special name for the devout watching of the Easter Sepulchre. Zara seems to have been peculiar in this that the Blessed Sacrament was enshrined in the Sepulchre on the Thursday instead of the

1 'In sero Cœnæ Domini orto tumultu populi in parva platea ante publicam supplicationem XL horarum, scilicet ante januam parvulæ Ecclesiæ S. Silvestri societatis Verberatorum, ego cum aliis duobus Rectoribus civitatis Jadræ unico signo finem imposuimus et pacem, et cum recto ordine etiam hoc anno facta fuit oratio, ut erat antiquitus, distributa per horas et personas usque ad sabbatum Gloriæ hora meridiana.' This entry does not seem to be found in the portions of the diary quoted by G. Lucio (*De Regno Dalmatiæ et Croatiæ*). 'Unico signo' may perhaps refer to a peal of bells.

Friday, and was removed *before* Mass on the Saturday. The confraternity of special watchers, however, must have paved the way for future developments.

The facts just quoted, assuming them to be fairly reliable, have obviously an intimate and interesting connexion with the origin of the devotion which we are considering. There can be no reasonable doubt that although the public and continuous *Quarant' Ore*, passing from church to church, dates only from the preaching of Fra Giuseppe in 1537, still, the name of the forty hours' prayer and its connexion with special confraternities were very much older. From institutions which we find in existence at a later date it is probable that it was inaugurated in some places on the Tuesday in Holy Week [1]; in others, as a form of expiation during the Carnival [2]; in others, four times a year at regular intervals; in others, on occasions of extraordinary danger or calamity.[3] In Milan itself, as already hinted, we have clear traces of such a practice some short time before the sermons of Fra Giuseppe da Ferno. In 1527, as we

1 This was specially the case at Saluzzo, where the devotion was organized by the Blessed Juvenal Ancina. It was also extended by him to the Carnival-tide. See the valuable monograph of Fr. A. Ferrato, S.J., *La Festa del Martedì Santo a Saluzzo*, 1897.

2 This practice, begun by Fr. Manare at Macerata, was greatly encouraged on his deathbed by St. Ignatius Loyola, but it was no doubt in existence elsewhere before his time.

3 On this see Moroni, *Dizionario di Erudizione*, vol. lvi. p. 114 and the numerous references there given.

learn on unexceptionable evidence, a certain Antonio Bellotto came to Milan from Grenoble and organized a confraternity in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in the rules of which association it was provided that the members should meet four times a year to maintain a forty hours' prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.[1] It was not, however, intended that the Blessed Sacrament should be exposed during the time these exercises lasted, and we are equally in the dark with regard to this feature in the devotion when, two years later, at the instance of a Dominican preacher, Thomas Nieto, the forty hours' prayer was revived in a more public way. The assertion made by Ughelli and others that a certain Friar Bonus of Cremona, acting under the direction of St. Antonio Maria Zaccaria, introduced in 1534 the form of *Quarant' Ore* with which we are familiar, seems to be very doubtful[3]; but, on the other hand, we have the plainest contemporary evidence[4] that the devotion was instituted in 1537, almost exactly as we know it, by the Capuchin, Fra Giuseppe da Ferno. The

[1] They met at Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, and the Assumption. See the article *Zur Geschichte des vierzigstündigen Gebetes*, by Fr. Norbert, Ord. Cap. in the *Katholik* for Aug. 1898, p. 151; or more fully, Mazzucchelli, *Osservazioni*, § 84.

[2] See Burigozzo's Contemporary Chronicle of Milan in the *Archivio Storico Italiano*, iii. p. 500 (1842).

[3] *Der Katholik*, l.c., pp. 152, 153; Mazzucchelli, l.c.; Ratti, *Contribuzione alla Storia Eucaristica di Milano*, p. 312, note.

[4] Burigozzo, *Cronica Milanese*, ubi supra; cf. the treatise of Fra Matthia Bellintani de Salo, p. 537, *De sancta Oratione XL. Horarum*, first published in Italian in 1586.

chronicler Burigozzo, who was living in Milan at the time, tells us of the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, of the lights and decorations of the altars, of the transferring of the Exposition from church to church, beginning with that near the Eastern Gate in the May of that year; and he characterizes the whole ceremonial as a *nuova trovata*. It is true that he does not directly connect the institution with the name of Fra Giuseppe, but he says that it was recommended in the pulpit of the Duomo, and we know that Fra Giuseppe was in Milan at that time, and had precisely preached the Lent in the Duomo itself. Moreover, the chronicles of the Capuchin Order [1] are very positive on the point, and there can be no doubt that these Capuchin religious were everywhere earnest in promoting the devotion. The really novel feature introduced by Fra Giuseppe seems to have been the provision made for its continuance by transferring the Exposition from church to church.[2] Moreover, the entire city seems now to have been thoroughly roused, and a petition was addressed very shortly afterwards to the Holy See, eliciting the grant of special indulgences. The brief, dated March 28,

[1] *Katholik*, 1898, ii. p. 157. Two of the writers had known Fra Giuseppe intimately.

[2] It would seem that St. Antonio Maria Zaccaria, the founder of the Barnabites, a contemporary of Fra Giuseppe, and somewhat his senior, was also very earnest in furthering the devotion of the Forty Hours' Prayer at Cremona and elsewhere, but in his case the Exposition was confined to one church, or carried on in a number of churches simultaneously.

1539, in which Paul III made answer to this appeal, is still extant:

Since [says the Pontiff] . . . Our beloved son the Vicar General of the Archbishop of Milan, at the prayer of the inhabitants of the said city, in order to appease the anger of God provoked by the offences of Christians, and in order to bring to nought the efforts and machinations of the Turks who are pressing forward to the destruction of Christendom, amongst other pious practices has established a round of prayers and supplications to be offered both by day and night by all the faithful of Christ, before our Lord's Most Sacred Body, in all the churches of the said city, in such a manner that these prayers and supplications are made by the faithful themselves relieving each other in relays for forty hours continuously in each church in succession, according to the order determined by the Vicar, and until the whole number of churches is completed,—We, approving in our Lord so pious an institution, and confirming the same by Our authority, etc., grant and remit, etc.[1]

Here follow the conditions of the Partial and Plenary Indulgences conceded by the Pope, conditions which are maintained with slight change in subsequent Briefs.

The parchment is endorsed on the back in a contemporary hand, 'The first concession of Indulgences, etc.,' and we may feel tolerably

[1] In the Archiepiscopal Archives of Milan. Sala, *Documenti*, vol. iv. p. 9. Cf. A. Ratti, 'Contribuzione alla Storia Eucaristica di Milano' in *La Scuola Cattolica*, 1895, August, p. 204.

certain that in this Brief, discovered by Canon Sala, we have the earliest formal document connected with a devotion which has since then spread so widely. It is interesting to note that in the details incidentally specified we find most of the features with which we are still familiar. There can be no doubt that the prayer before the 'Most Sacred Body of Jesus Christ' means prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed, the continuance by night and by day, and the transference of the devotion from one church to another in turn are also clearly specified, and finally the principal intention commended to the pious prayers of the faithful is still the peace of Christendom.

As has been said above, it is generally agreed[1] that the Capuchin, Father Giuseppe da Ferno, if he did not first conceive the idea, may at least claim the merit of having given new life to the observance of the *Quarant' Ore*, and that the splendour with which it has never ceased to be observed in Milan, and its subsequent propagation in other parts of the world, is due mainly to his influence. As the story throws further light upon the dominant idea to which the devotion owed its wide popularity, we may summarize the account given of this episode by the learned Canon Aristide Sala.[2]

1 Cf. especially Sala, *Biografia*, part ii. p. 106.
2 *Biografia di San Carlo*, ii. p. 104 seq.

The Milanese Crisis of 1537

In the month of October, 1535, the ducal branch of the family of Sforza which reigned in Milan became extinct by the death of Francis Sforza, who left no issue. The citizens thereupon despatched envoys to the Emperor Charles V, with instructions to place the duchy in his hands and to profess submission to his authority, in accordance with the will of the late Duke. This step having come to the knowledge of the King of France, Francis I, he immediately put himself at the head of a considerable army to vindicate the claim which he made to the duchy in virtue of the marriage of Valentina, daughter of John Galeazzo Visconti, with Louis, Duke of Orleans, his great-grandfather. Prince Henry, the Dauphin, had already marched into Piedmont, and in view of the attitude of the Milanese Senate, which had returned no other answer to the statement of his claim than to hoist the Imperial banner over the walls of the city, Francis decided to effect an entrance by force of arms.

At this news the townspeople were seized with panic. They had not yet recovered from the alarm and the cruel sufferings caused by a pestilence which only twelve years before had carried off forty thousand of their fellow-citizens, and now they saw themselves threatened by war and all the horrors it brings in its train. The Lent of the year 1537 was just beginning, when Milan

was thrown into a ferment by these disastrous tidings. The Capuchin, Father Giuseppe da Ferno, was then occupying the pulpit of the Duomo. Absorbed as they were in the preparations for war, and distracted with the numberless anxieties of such a time of peril, the people of Milan at first showed little eagerness to attend the sermons of the new preacher; but soon, attracted by his eloquence, and still more by his reputation for holiness, they came in crowds to the Cathedral in the hope of appeasing the anger of God. This was Father Giuseppe's opportunity. For years past he had cherished the desire to establish a devotion in honour of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and when he saw the earnestness of the people and the despair so clearly written on their faces, he felt that the moment of realization had come at last.

We have already seen that, as appears even from the Brief of Pope Paul III in 1539, the Forty Hours' Prayer was known in Milan before that date.[1] The special aim of Father Giuseppe was to give it a somewhat different form, and to pro-

[1] St. Charles Borromeo, in some instructions issued to parish priests in 1582, speaks as if the Forty Hours' Prayer had been handed down from remote antiquity, bidding them explain to their flocks 'come sia cavata questa orazione delle 40 ore dall' antichità quando la notte i fideli vegliavano in fare orazione, e cantar salmi, ed in specie ordinata per memoria della Passione di N. Sig., e pero ella dura 40 ore, come quaranta ore egli stette nella sepoltura.' (*Acta Med. Ecc.* p. 871.) Besides the brief of 1539, several others are still preserved in the Archiepiscopal Archives. See the article by A. Ratti in *La Scuola Cattolica* already cited.

vide for its continuance by enlisting the co-operation of every parish in the city. He proposed his scheme in the pulpit as the best means of disarming God's anger, and he ventured to promise his hearers that if they were in earnest in following his advice, the war with which they were threatened would be averted.

The words of the preacher were not disregarded. The citizens pledged themselves to keep up the prayers of the Forty Hours, according to Father Giuseppe's scheme, for a year together, the Blessed Sacrament being exposed in one church after another throughout the city. The exercise is said by some authorities to have begun at once in the Duomo itself. The church was magnificently adorned, and for forty hours the people came in crowds, often in procession, to adore the Body of our Lord and to hear the Word of God preached several times in the day by the fervent orator. After an interval, an orderly circuit was arranged for the other churches, which were decked as for their special gala days and were too small to contain the crowds which came to worship and to make atonement. With the crowd went also Father Giuseppe. His zeal, it is said, was never at a loss for words to animate their courage and to kindle their contrition anew.

Whilst the city of Milan was thus tossed between the fear of invasion on the one hand, and the hope of some supernatural interposition on

the other, at the very moment when no chance of peace seemed to remain, these two inveterate enemies, who had been determined up to this to settle their quarrel by the sword, conceived a sudden desire of peace and friendship. Charles V and Francis I, at the entreaty of Mary, widow of King Louis of Hungary, and of Eleanor, her sister, the wife of the French King, consented to sign a truce for six months, and Henry the Dauphin marched his army back into France again.

The Milanese, at the news of this unexpected truce and of the evacuation of Piedmont by the French troops, once more raised their heads from the state of dejection into which they had fallen, and the city rang with their thanksgivings. The year of the Forty Hours was not yet completed when the two monarchs, meeting at Aigues-Mortes in Provence, availed themselves of the mediation of Pope Paul III to conclude a definitive treaty. The news was officially announced in Milan in the month of June, 1538. With one common voice the citizens decreed that in memory of their wonderful deliverance and in testimony of their gratitude to God, the prayers of the *Quarant' Ore* should be maintained for ever afterwards in the form in which they had been instituted that year.

Ceremonial Details

Milan was faithful to its promise. Besides the first Brief of Paul III already mentioned, the archives preserve several other Papal documents renewing in almost identical terms the Indulgences granted in the earliest of these. In 1565 St. Charles Borromeo entered upon his duties as Archbishop, and under his vigorous administration there was not much danger of so pious a custom being allowed to fall into desuetude. In the decrees of most of the Provincial Councils which were held during his archiepiscopate, express mention is made of the *Quarant' Ore*. In the first Council (1565) it was enacted that this 'Prayer of the Forty Hours before the Most Holy Sacrament, which is wont to be attended by a great concourse of people, shall be retained and further extended (*propagetur*) with the same piety and devotion with which it was first established.'[1] In the third Council (1575) elaborate regulations were provided for its more orderly and reverent celebration,[2] and it is obvious from the details given that it had spread by this time beyond the city itself into the rural districts, and probably throughout the whole ecclesiastical province of which Milan was the centre. Some

[1] *Acta Mediolanensis Ecclesiæ*, p. 7.

[2] The *Instructio Clementina* seems in many of its provisions to follow the lines laid down in these ordinances of St. Charles a century and a half earlier.

of these provisions are very interesting. They show us that in its first institution the *Quarant' Ore* was far from being regarded as an occupation for a few pious ladies with abundant leisure or of exceptional self-sacrifice. It was pre-eminently a popular devotion of which the people of all ranks and classes shared the burthen, led and organized by the clergy. Accordingly, the Council provides that a committee is to be nominated by the Bishop for each district of his diocese, 'respectable citizens (*viri graves*) who are lovers of piety and of the spiritual life,' with at least one ecclesiastic for president, who is to direct them in the preparations to be made. They are empowered to collect alms from each parish for the decent and orderly carrying out of these religious functions, the surplus, if any, to be spent in promoting the honour of the Blessed Sacrament. The arrangement of times, watches, notifications to confraternities, etc., are to be entirely in their hands, and they are to do their utmost to secure that the prayer may be continued without interruption by night as well as by day.

And in order [says the decree] that they may not make arrangements rashly and inconsiderately, they should make a calculation of the number of inhabitants, both men and women, in the parish, and after dividing them into convenient sets for the purpose in view, they should arrange the hours for them to perform this pious exercise of prayer in accordance with

the calculation and division previously made, so that each set may come separately to the prayer at their own proper time, and the church may never be left without worshippers.[1]

While the Blessed Sacrament is exposed there must always, during the daytime, be two clerics in surplices watching within the sanctuary rails, one of whom is to be at least in deacon's orders. During the night it is sufficient to have one cleric within the sanctuary, but he must be of the rank of subdeacon. Women are not to be allowed in the church during the night, nor are the church doors to remain open, but the watchers and others will be admitted on knocking, and it is clearly expected that for the decent carrying out of the function, several laymen besides the cleric in the sanctuary will always be present.[2] If any church cannot keep up the night-watching suitably, St. Charles prescribes for his own diocese that it is to be left out of the list,[3] though the Provincial Council suggests that in such a case the Blessed Sacrament may be replaced in the tabernacle during the night, and the number of forty hours

[1] *Acta Mediolanensis Ecclesiæ*, i. pp. 117, 118.

[2] From the answer to a doubt submitted from Savona to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in 1588, it would seem that a minimum of ten other watchers was required besides the cleric in the sanctuary. (See *Analecta Juris Pontificii*, Ser. x. col. 688.)

[3] *Avvertenze per l'Orazione delle Quarant' Ore* in *Acta Mediolanensis Ecclesiæ*, vol. ii. p. 680.

be made up by continuing the Exposition longer during the daytime on the first and last days.

Let there always be [says the Saint] a good number of persons present, especially the parishioners, when the devotion is held in a parish church, *all the families and persons* of the parish being divided according to hours, but without assigning any of the night-hours to women.[1]

It may be objected, of course, that in a Protestant country like England our congregations are not numerous enough to provide watchers on so generous a scale as St. Charles seems to expect. This no doubt is true for the greater part of the country, but it might none the less be very reasonably questioned whether the number of Catholics in London at the present day does not exceed the whole population of Milan in the time of St. Charles, though, of course, in modern London they are distributed over a much wider area.

It would be tedious to dwell at any length upon the external features of the *Quarant' Ore* as it was practised for so long in Milan and in the other cities of Italy. We might speak of the long and loud clashing of bells ringing out after *Ave Maria* the evening before, to give notice of the celebration on the morrow, of the church-porch gay with streamers and garlands of flowers, which was to remind all the passers-by that *Gesu Sagra-*

[1] Ibid.

mentato was holding His court within, of the curtain across the door, and of the windows artificially darkened in order to secure recollection, a recollection which at Milan was not to be broken even by the celebration of Mass,[1] as long as the Blessed Sacrament was enthroned upon the high altar, of the careful separation of women and men by a wooden partition, or at least a curtain, of the curiously minute regulations as to the number of lamps and candles—the latter not to exceed ten and not to be fewer than six in number, or of the great bell which all through the night was to be sounded at the end of every hour to mark the flight of time for the parishioners who were to take part in the watching. This last regulation must have been a distressing one to the light sleepers in the neighbourhood—if indeed such a thing as insomnia was known in those days. We may pass on, however, to modern times; and to show that Milan is still faithful to its old traditions, I will venture to quote a reliable if somewhat florid description of the opening of the *Quarant' Ore* there, from the *Histoire de St. Charles Borromé*, by the Abbé Sylvain[2]:

The Church of Milan [he says] has kept up the

[1] It was prescribed that the priests belonging to the parish in which the *Quarant' Ore* was being kept, should go to some other church to say their Masses. At Milan also there was no rule that the Exposition should begin and end with High Mass. The processions and litanies were enjoined, but the Mass was optional.

[2] Vol. iii. p. 202.

tradition in all its primitive splendour. Nothing can equal the pomp and solemnity with which on the first Sunday in Advent, according to the Ambrosian rite, the prayers of the Forty Hours are inaugurated in the great Cathedral. The clergy of all the parishes are there assembled, and the Archbishop himself officiates. Before placing the Blessed Sacrament upon the altar, where for forty hours It is to remain exposed as upon a throne of love to receive and hearken to the petitions of Its subjects and Its children, It is carried in procession down the nave and between the vaulted arches of that magnificent temple. It would be impossible to describe the feelings of admiration, of confidence, and of love, with which the soul is flooded at the sight of this triumphal progress of the King of kings. The crosses and candlesticks of gold, of strange Byzantine pattern, the priestly vestments with their rich orphreys and embroidery, gleam and sparkle in the brightness of the lamps, but still more brilliant and glorious than all, we may see under the canopy that golden sun which contains the Light of the World. Men of high distinction follow behind, praying. Their faith and their love burn even brighter than the lighted candle, which they hold in their hands to honour and escort the King of Heaven and earth. It is really the whole city of Milan, represented by the clergy, by its children, of both sexes, of every age, and of every rank, that comes here to renew and to fulfil the promise of its ancestors.

There can be no doubt that the devotion of

which we are speaking had spread very widely from Milan as a centre, both in Italy and beyond the Alps, long before the Constitution *Graves et diuturnæ* of Clement VIII, which sanctioned it on such a grand scale for Rome itself. As we have already seen, it was adopted before 1550 for the Confraternity of the Trinità dei Pellegrini in Rome, under St. Philip's direction, and his biographers tell us that when the Exposition was going on he used himself to spend the whole night in prayer, keeping the hours for the watchers, 'while, as he rang his little bell, he would say, "Now your hour of prayer is finished, but the time for doing good is not finished yet."'[1] Elsewhere in Rome the *Quarant' Ore* would seem to have owed its introduction to St. Ignatius and the Society of Jesus; though in their hands it appears to have assumed the form rather of a Forty Hours' Expiation of the sins by which God is offended at the Carnival season. Under this special aspect the devotion was later on enriched with separate Indulgences, and the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was usually appointed for the Monday and Tuesday after Quinquagesima, or for the preceding Thursday. Both in France and in many parts of Italy this became the form under which the Forty Hours' Prayer was perhaps most widely popular; and almost everywhere on the Continent the custom has lasted to our own day.

[1] Capecelatro, English Translation, vol. i. p. 161.

We may note that there exists a curiously interesting record of the extension of this pious practice outside of Italy by the aid of an exiled community of English Religious, famous alike by the traditional glory of their house in pre-Reformation days, and by their own most patient endurance of persecution for the faith. The adventures and sufferings of the Nuns of Sion form a theme over which it would be easy to linger, but I must only say very briefly here, that on being expelled from England on the death of Queen Mary, they found a home, or rather a succession of homes, for several years in the Low Countries. Being driven thence by circumstances which they were powerless to resist, they came to Rouen in 1580, where they met at first with a not too cordial welcome amongst a people who were still prone to regard all English strangers as their natural enemies. However, things improved as time went on, and the Sion Nuns, having thrown themselves heart and soul into the cause of the League, came to play rather a prominent part, chiefly through the means of their chaplain, Father Foster, in the agitation of which Rouen was then the centre. A graphic description of their experiences was drawn up by one of their number, and from a MS. copy of this relation, the property of Lord Edmund Talbot, I proceed to quote two or three extracts which have reference to the subject of this chapter. All of them belong to a period

between 1580 and 1592 (the siege of Rouen, of which there is mention, took place in 1591) and are consequently anterior to the formal approval of the *Quarant' Ore* devotion for the city of Rome which was only issued in the latest of these years.

Speaking of one period of the League Wars, about 1584, the chronicle says:

> As for Divine means, there sprung up suddenly and almost miraculously such devotion in the common people, that while our Father (the chaplain, Father Foster) was at Rheims in Champagne, there were daily processions of a hundred or two hundred people, all clothed in penitential white, in every good town and city, and sometimes four or five in one day to the great church (which in France is always the church of our Blessed Lady), and there remained the whole night praying and singing the litanies, a thing never read in history before, and a manifest sign from Heaven of the necessity of prayers and penance to prevent some extraordinary evil, and these processions were at the same time more or less through all the Catholic provinces of France without any command from their curates and pastors, at least in the beginning.[1]

This no doubt has no direct reference to the Forty Hours' Prayer, but it describes a state of things which must certainly have paved the way for it. Our next extract is more explicit:

[1] *The Account of the Voyage of the English Nuns* [of Sion] *from France to Spain*, pp. 17, 18.

In all our conflicts we found the words of St. Paul (2 Cor. ch. i.) to be verified: 'Even as the crosses and passions of Christ do abound in us, even so by Christ our comfort doth abound.' For, as by these victories over the bad, their malice to us increased, so we were more grateful and acceptable to the good and more frequented by them than before, who for the good opinion they had of us and affection they bore us, did almost continually allot to us and the Capuchins (who were also accounted zealous in the cause), the oratories, sermons, and prayers, and exercises of forty hours to be kept in our church or theirs, especially in the time of the siege and such like times of pressing necessity.[1]

It will be seen from this that the church of the Sion Nuns was the favourite resort of the more devout among the party of the League, and that the time of the siege and of these political disturbances was marked by 'oratories, and sermons, and prayers, and exercises of forty hours.' A very similar enumeration is made in another passage later on, where the causes are detailed which forced the nuns finally to quit Rouen:

Besides, we were particularly observed to have been every way very zealous and forward in assisting the League, and particularly when the people encouraged by the Religious and enraged by many

[1] Ibid. pp. 25, 26. It will be remembered that Fra Giuseppe da Ferno was a Capuchin. Many testimonies might be quoted of the zeal of the Order in promoting the *Quarant' Ore*.

provocations were zealous in defence of the cause, and the party of the Politicks [1] was much weakened, there was no place so noted as our convent for having frequent quarantine hours and oratories, sometimes of seven, sometimes of fourteen, sometimes of forty days as in the time of the siege. This concourse of people to our church was much remarked and envied by the heretics and Politicks who fled away, and by the friends of the contrary party who staid behind; the former of whom being now all to return with greater authority than ever they had before, were both able and resolved to injure and revenge themselves on us poor strangers at their pleasure. These things will appear to be just and weighty motives for our leaving France, and were what now troubled and lay so heavy upon our Father.[2]

It has seemed worth while to quote these passages here for more than one reason. In the first place they illustrate the extent to which the devotion of the 'quarantine hours,' as it is here called, had already spread, far from its original home, even before the Constitution of Clement VIII, and how a convent of English nuns seems to have had some little share in propagating it on a foreign soil. Again, it is curious to note the connexion of the *Quarant' Ore* with what are here called *Oratories*, a phrase which occurs also

[1] The *Politicks* is the nickname given to the party who were willing to come to terms with Henry IV.

[2] Ibid. pp. 114, 115.

in the same sense in another passage in the MS.[1] That *oratories* is a word intended by the writer to convey some sort of religious exercise can hardly admit of doubt. There has always seemed to me to be some little mystery, which St. Philip's biographers do not wholly clear up, about the choice of this name to designate the Congregation which he founded. If 'oratory' was then commonly understood not so much of the place, as of the *service*[2]—the sermon and prayers alternating with music—which was held there, it seems easier to explain both why a certain Congregation which promoted this devotion should be known as Fathers of the Oratory, and why a particular type of music should be called an oratory or oratorio. With reference to the connexion in which this allusion to oratories is found, there can be no doubt that the followers of St. Philip greatly favoured the *Quarant' Ore* and similar devotions. Blessed Juvenal Ancina, in 1603, drew up a code of regulations for the ceremonies to be observed in it, though I hardly think that one of his latest biographers can be right in saying that he was the first to introduce the *Quarant' Ore* into Piedmont.

1 'And in this time of the siege we had the Oratories and whole concourse of the city, with continual sermons, service, and prayers for the full space of six weeks together.' (Ibid. p. 38.)

2 In the *Acta Mediolanensis Ecclesiæ* of St. Charles' time we find mention of certain conferences of the rural clergy 'quas *oratoria* vocant.' In the various Roman institutions of 'oratorii notturni' the word seems used in the same sense.

At Saluzzo, of which Blessed Juvenal was bishop, this exercise was established almost immediately upon his appointment in 1603. He decreed that it should be observed in the Cathedral every year from Palm Sunday to the Tuesday in Holy Week; and in a still extant pastoral instruction upon the subject he directs that as the devotion was instituted in memory of the death of our Saviour, who lay for forty hours in the tomb, the faithful during its continuance, ought to meditate upon the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ.[1] Over and above this, Blessed Juvenal, the very next year (1604), caused the *Quarant' Ore* to be celebrated during the Carnival-tide, and the witnesses in the process of his Beatification describe how fervently he himself took part in these exercises—'remaining on his knees,' one of them says, 'for as much as six hours at a stretch, as I myself have seen him.' And here also, as at Rouen, the prayer of the Exposition was diversified from time to time by what the Sion Nuns call 'oratories,' consisting of music and pious discourses,[2] meant to attract the youth of the city from the dances (*balli*) and dissipations outside.

But, to conclude this chapter, perhaps the

[1] See Ferrato, *La Festa del Martedi Santo*, p. 18.

[2] He (B. Juvenal) 'invitava il popolo, faceva cantare qualche laude spirituale super qualche libro, indi egli sermoneggiava, e questo tutto per distrarre le persone dalle vanità del mondo, che in tali tempi sogliono essere a strada piena.' Ferrato, l.c. p. 25. with many similar testimonies.

most interesting feature of the extracts quoted above from the Sion Chronicle is the evidence they afford that the *Quarant' Ore* was still in 1591 regarded primarily as a prayer for the blessing of peace. This is the thought even more prominently brought before the faithful by the supplications of the Litanies and by the sorrowful character of the *Missa pro Pace*, which to some appears so anomalous. We shall, therefore, be entering most fully into the spirit of this devotion if during the Forty Hours we offer our most earnest prayers to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, that it may please God to give peace and unity not only to His Church, but also to the nations that devoutly honour His name throughout the whole world.

CHAPTER IV

The Lenten Ritual

It not unfrequently happens in liturgical matters that some slight and almost unnoticed detail preserves the memory of institutions of the most venerable antiquity. The rubric for standing or kneeling at the recitation of the *Angelus*, of which we shall have occasion to speak in a future chapter, might be cited as a case in point, but what concerns us more immediately at present is a feature still retained in the mitigated abstinence which we practise in Lent and Advent. For all the Church, with the exception of a few of the more austere religious orders, that abstinence is now limited throughout the greater part of these penitential seasons to two days only in the week, the Wednesday and the Friday. Why Wednesday and Friday rather than Tuesday and Saturday? we may sometimes have been tempted to ask ourselves. Or, if the Friday seemed to be naturally indicated by our observance of Friday as an abstinence day throughout

the year, why the Wednesdays in Lent in preference to, say, the Mondays or the Thursdays?

The answer to this question takes us back a very long way into primitive times, and it brings us face to face with an important element in the earlier lenten ritual, to wit, the Roman Stations. The subject is obscure in some of its aspects, and very different views have been held with regard to it, but it offers in many other respects a sufficiently firm foothold of fact, and to this I will try to give the necessary prominence.

The Roman Stations

If we open our Missals anywhere in the 'Proper' for Lent, we shall find that not only the Sunday but also each 'feria,' i.e. week-day, has a special Mass appointed for it, and, moreover, that at the head of each of these Masses stands an indication in some such form as this—*Statio ad S. Cæciliam*, or *Statio ad S. Paulum*, etc. Probably it is hardly needful to explain that this last feature calls attention to the liturgical 'station,' in other words it names the particular church in Rome to which in former times the Pope on that day went to celebrate Mass with some degree of solemnity. From this we necessarily draw the conclusion that, at the time when our present Mass-book was compiled, the season of Lent in Rome was marked out from the rest of the year not only by the fast, but also by the fact that the Pope or his representatives daily

said Mass in public at some particular church, which varied from day to day according to a fixed and traditional order. That this arrangement was observed from the eighth and ninth centuries, onwards, is disputed by no one, but our authorities differ somewhat in their views as to how it arose and how far back we can trace it.

Remembering that this liturgical *rendezvous* was consistently designated by the name 'station,' it is tempting to ask whether anything can be learned from the earlier history of the word as used by Christian writers. *Statio*, which in classical Latin means an outpost, is undoubtedly familiar to Tertullian in the sense of a fast, or at least of a *semijejunium*, i.e. a fast which terminated at the ninth hour—three o'clock in the afternoon. Moreover, the term seems to be specially identified by Tertullian and other early writers with the ordinary fasts of rule practised by the first Christians on all the Wednesdays and Fridays of the year outside of Paschal time. These weekly fasts were probably established in apostolic times in imitation of a similar Jewish custom —the words, attributed to the Pharisee in the Gospel, 'I fast twice in the week,' will occur to the mind of every one—but, whereas the Jews fasted on the Monday and Thursday, the Christians, probably to mark their dissent from Jewish practices, chose for this purpose the Wednesday and the Friday. In some of our earliest Christian documents, e.g. the newly recovered Didache,

this distinction is insisted upon with special emphasis. Here then in the very beginnings of the Church we find the tradition established of these two days of penitential observance. The memory of them has always been preserved, at least in the Ember days, and the law has again found expression in our own times by the retention of the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent when other abstinence days have disappeared.

But we may safely go a step further. Besides this fast on the Wednesday and the Friday, it seems clear that from an early period some sort of service was held on these days at which the faithful assisted. In many places the liturgy properly so called, i.e. the Mass, was celebrated. This seems to have been the case in Africa and in Jerusalem. At Alexandria, however, the station did not include the liturgy; for the historian Socrates tells us that on these days 'the Scriptures were read and interpreted by the Doctors; in short, all was done as at the Synaxes, *except the celebration of the mysteries*.' Now it has been urged with some show of reason that in this matter the usage of Rome was similar to that of Alexandria, and that although the Roman Christians met for service on the stational days, Mass was not in the beginning of things celebrated publicly at any time except on Sundays and festivals.[1] This, perhaps, is doubtful; but

[1] Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 230. Cf. Mangani, *L'Antica Liturgia Romana*, iii. p. 205; Probst, *Sacramentarien und Ordines*.

what appears more certain is the fact that the fasting-stations by degrees changed their character. It was not the fast but the liturgical reunion in some assigned place which was eventually denoted by the name station. In the lectionary or table of readings from the Holy Scriptures compiled by St. Victor of Capua in 546,[1] we find that there were special readings prescribed for the Wednesdays and Fridays throughout Lent, and for each day of Holy Week. It seems highly probable that this also represented the usage of Rome at the same period; and by this time, at any rate, we may suppose that the celebration of Mass had been added to the reading of the lessons from Holy Scripture. Somewhat later we find in other lectionaries of the same kind a liturgical system which probably represents another stage in the development of the stations.[2] Here we have three *synaxes*, or meetings of the faithful for worship, appointed for each week in Lent, viz. on the Monday, the Wednesday and the Friday; and a curious trace of this arrangement still survives in our Missal, where the reader may notice that the lenten 'Tract'

[1] This is preserved in the famous Codex Fuldensis, and this arrangement, as I think Dom Germain Morin has shown satisfactorily, was closely associated with the Roman system of readings. See *Revue Bénédictine*, vii. p. 422.

[2] This may best be studied in the Neapolitan *capitula*, published by Dom Germain Morin in the *Revue Bénédictine*, 1891, vol. viii.; and in his Appendix to the *Liber Comicus*. See also the first *Ordo Romanus*, § 24.

beginning *Domine non secundum peccata* is recited only on the Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; not on the Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. A still further stage is marked by the addition of the Saturday in the last four weeks of Lent; —this was probably brought about by the introduction of some special features in connexion with the 'scrutinies' of the catechumens, or candidates for baptism; and finally it seems highly probable that the whole lenten liturgical system was revised by St. Gregory the Great at the end of the sixth century,[1] and arranged substantially as we now know it. It was he, we may believe, who filled up every vacant day except the Thursdays, and who organized afresh, if he did not originate, those solemn visits to the more famous churches and shrines in Rome, of which the record still stands at the head of the Masses in our Missals. The idea itself was certainly older. We find these liturgical reunions at different shrines under the presidency of the Bishop of Jerusalem invested with much importance in the pages of Egeria about the year 380. Indeed, it is likely enough that the system of liturgical 'stations,' in the later technical sense of the word, was borrowed from Jerusalem itself, for we have abundant evidence from a very early date of the tendency to copy in the West, the actual disposition of the holy places

[1] See Dom Morin in the *Revue Bénédictine*, vii. p. 368.

around the sepulchre of Christ our Lord [1] and to visit them in procession. On the other hand, the practice of offering the Holy Sacrifice wherever possible upon the actual tombs of the martyrs had been familiar from the beginning of things, and the idea of sallying forth to say Mass away from the Pope's cathedral church cannot have been a novelty.

With regard to the precise details of the growth of the stational system we must be content to remain in ignorance, but there is a high probability, *pace* Mgr. Duchesne, that in the time of St. Gregory the Great the organization was already existing in full vigour. The first *Ordo Romanus*, as preserved to us, may have admitted some few modifications of later date, but I believe that it preserves in substance a record of the reforms of St. Gregory and a faithful description of what took place in his time,[2] It would take us out of our way to give any lengthy description of the stational Mass as the *Ordo* sets it before us. The curious reader may there find narrated in detail how the assembly of the clergy and officials meets first at some church used as a *rendezvous*, where the procession is formed to set out to the station of the day. The sacred ministers

[1] See on this subject an article by Fr. Grisar, *Gerusalemme e Roma*, in the *Civiltà Cattolica*, Sept. 21, 1895, or more fully in the same author's *Analecta Romana*, i. p. 555 seq.

[2] See Grisar, 'Die Stationsfeier und der erste römische Ordo' in the *Zeitschrift f. k. Theologie*, ix. 385–422, and *Analecta Romana*, i. p. 213.

are grouped around the Pope in order of due precedence, according to their special functions. All the seven ecclesiastical regions of the city are represented by their acolytes and *defensores* and subdeacons and notaries. The acolytes go in front walking, but the papal deacons with their *primicerius* ride on horseback, as does the Pope himself, except that at a later epoch he often used a *sedia gestatoria*. Immediately before him the apostolic subdeacon bears a processional cross, while at his side the *stratores* help to clear the way and keep off the crowd. Behind them ride four ecclesiastical dignitaries, the *Vice-dominus*, the *Vestiarius*, the *Nomenclator* and the *Sacellarius*[1] the last two of whom receive the petitions which may be presented by chance supplicants or distribute alms. The clergy of the church where the station is held come out to meet the Pope, and conduct him to the sacristy, where he is vested for Mass with the same solemnity with which the vesting of a bishop now takes place at the beginning of a pontifical function. Finally, the Introit is sung by the choir, while the Pope, preceded by fuming censers and by the seven regionary acolytes with their candles lighted, moves towards the altar and prostrates himself before it. Then the Holy Sacrifice is begun, but before the assembly is dismissed a regionary

[1] 'Feria tali veniente collecta (the muster) in basilica beati illius, statio in basilica sancti illius.' *Ordo of St. Amand:* Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 473.

subdeacon announces from the foot of the altar that on the next day the station will be held at such and such a church; to which the choir answer, 'Thanks be to God.'

It does not require any very great effort of the imagination to realize what a profound impression must have been produced by this striking ceremonial, reinforcing daily that change of life and habits which was inevitably imposed by the fast. I am inclined to believe that despite the absence of the Popes at Avignon,—despite even the vicissitudes of the middle ages and the excesses of the renaissance period, Rome never quite shook off the spell which was laid upon her by the solemn processions and litanies of the early Christian stations. Certainly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Roman Lent was accounted a marvellous sight by the strangers who came thither from other lands, whether they were Catholics or heretics. One has only to read the comments of such a cynical old philosopher as Michel de Montaigne to appreciate the fact that he was profoundly impressed and edified by what he saw, but I prefer to quote some observations made by a broad-minded English Protestant of the time of James I. It is thus that Sir Edwyn Sandys speaks in his *Europæ Speculum* a work that in its time gained for its author a high reputation for candour and judgment.

Notwithstanding the growth of vice, the people

of all sorts are much reformed during the time of Lent; no blasphemies or foul words as before, their vanity of all sorts laid reasonably aside, their pleasure abandoned, their diet and all things else composed to austerity and a state of penitence. They have their daily sermons with collection of alms, to which all men resort, and to judge by their outward show, they seem generally to have great remorse of their sins; insomuch that I must confess that I seemed to myself in Italy to have best learned the right use of Lent; there first to have discerned the great fruit of it, and the reason for which those sages in the Church first instituted it. Neither can I yield to the fancies of those, who because we ought at all times to lead lives worthy of our profession, think it superstitious to have any time in which we are to exact or expect it more than another. Rather I conceive that it is a hard matter to hold men within the lists of piety, and that it is therefore fit that there should be a time in the year, and that of a reasonable continuance, to constrain men to recall themselves to more serious thoughts and courses, lest sin, by having no bridle, should become headstrong and unconquerable and man be inured to vice.

It would be hard to find in any Catholic writer a more profound and philosophic statement of the principles underlying our lenten observance.

The Broad Stole and the Folded Chasuble

Some chance allusions in the St. Amand *Ordo*, which Mgr. Duchesne himself assigns to the eighth century, make reference to a detail of ceremonial which must often have attracted the notice of those who attend High Mass in Lent. Instead of the ordinary dalmatic and tunicle[1] the sacred ministers who accompany the celebrant are vested in chasubles 'folded' (i.e. pinned up) in front. Moreover, in the course of the service, these chasubles are removed—in the case of the subdeacon only while he reads the Epistle; but in the case of the deacon from before the Gospel until after the Communion, during which time he wears in its place a broad purple stole covering his other stole. The substitution of the chasuble for the dalmatic or tunicle is not improbably connected with the usage of the old stational Mass in Rome, but the point is a doubtful one. Let me speak first of what is much more certain —the history of the broad stole. What is this broad stole?

Let me begin my explanation with a little bit of philology. We all know very well what a *clock* is, and we all know equally well what a *cloak* is, and I dare say it has never occurred to us that these

[1] Rubrical purists insist upon the distinction between dalmatic and tunicle, the dalmatic worn by the deacon, the tunicle by the subdeacon. In practice they are identical.

two words are connected. Yet the relationship between them is a very close one. As we now use the word *clock* we understand the term to denote the whole of any largish piece of machinery for telling the time, but etymologically the clock was only the striking part of the arrangement, in other words the *bell*. *Glocke* in German, as many of my readers will know, means a bell. Now what is a cloak? A cloak in its origin was only a bell-shaped garment which went over everything else. If any one will take a circular tablecloth, make a hole in the middle and put his head through, he will have a bell-shaped garment or a cloak—but he would also have a tolerable model of another garment of a more ecclesiastical kind—I mean he would have a garment which represented fairly well the original form of the Mass vestment *par excellence*, the chasuble.[1] Chasuble is only a corruption of *casula*, which means little house. A priest in his chausble was under a bell-shaped garment which covered everything down to his feet.

Now a chasuble or little house—it is simply a Spanish poncho—was an excellent form of dress to go out of doors in when it was raining, but it had its inconveniences when its wearer

[1] We should obtain the shape of the primitive chasuble more exactly if we took a semicircular piece of material and if we sewed the right-hand and the left-hand halves of the straight edge together. Or to put the matter another way, if we sewed up the front of an ordinary cope, leaving only space to put the head through, the garment resulting would be a primitive chasuble.

wanted to do anything with his hands. It was necessary for him to put his arms under it and let the whole garment hang in folds about his elbows, an arrangement which was both awkward and fatiguing. No wonder then that from an early period in the middle ages we find many devices to modify the inconveniences of the bell-shaped chasuble. The first was to get somebody else to hold it up. If we notice the priest now at High Mass, we shall see that whenever he has anything much to do with his hands, as when he incenses the altar, he has the deacon and sub-deacon beside him taking hold of his chasuble. Even the little server during the Elevation at Low Mass comes and kneels behind the priest and generally does his best to distract him by lifting the stiff back of a modern French vestment up the priest's neck. It is quite an unnecessary arrangement now, but with the old-shaped chasubles it must have been a great help to have the weight of the vestment taken off the arms in incensing the altar or lifting the chalice. Again, another device which was resorted to was to pull the chasuble up with cords running through rings at the sides. We find this arrangement still surviving in some old vestments, though it was not universal. But the simplest device of all, and the one which prevailed in the long run, was to cut away the sides; and that cutting away, which was very moderate to begin with, has grown and grown until at last we have reached

the fiddle-pattern cardboard-lined abomination, the modern French chasuble.

Now during Lent and Advent the deacon and subdeacon wore—not dalmatics—but chasubles. If the chasuble was inconvenient for the celebrant, it was still more inconvenient for them. They had no one to lift it for them, and they—especially the deacon—had a great deal to do with their hands in carrying books, helping the celebrant, receiving the offerings of the faithful, administering Holy Communion, etc., etc. As this was foreseen, it was provided for, before Mass began, by pinning up the front of their chasubles, so that their hands would be left comparatively free, and that no doubt was a great help. The arrangement has perpetuated itself in the modern 'folded chasuble' which is worn by the deacon and subdeacon during Lent. But even this expedient was insufficient, this terrible chasuble would still get in the way. We may believe that the deacon got desperate, for what he finally did was this: Before the part of the Mass began in which he was more actively employed—before the Gospel in fact,—he took his chasuble, spread it out, folded it up like a plaid, and then fastened it, as a soldier fastens his greatcoat, in a big roll over one shoulder and under the other arm. It might almost be thought that this cannot be a serious account of the origin of the broad stole for which the deacon now exchanges his Mass vestment, but the history of this metamorphosis is quite certain

and can be traced clearly in every stage of its development. Nay, the official *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, which was drawn up about the beginning of the seventeenth century, has not even yet changed its rubric prescribing that the deacon on the Sundays in Lent is to put off his chasuble before the Gospel, fold it up, and then put it on again stole-wise over his other stole: but as a more convenient arrangement the Ceremonial suggests that instead of folding the chasuble he has just taken off, he may put on another which the sacristan may have placed there already folded. In this way it came to pass, first that a real chasuble was worn, then a piece of silk very light, and made expressly so that it could be easily folded, and finally a broad sash that did not make any pretence of being a chasuble at all.

It is curious to find that this adaptation of the chasuble stole-wise comes down to us from at least the eighth century. The St. Amand *Ordo* speaks of a priest on occasion reading the Gospel 'girt with his chasuble (*præcinctus de planeta*) like a deacon,' and Amalarius and Pseudo-Alcuin are still more explicit. About the time of St. Dunstan we read in the *Concordia Regularis:*

Let the priest, deacon and subdeacon set about their respective offices clad in chasubles. And let this custom of wearing the chasuble by the tradition of our fathers before us, be only observed in Lent and at the Ember days. When the subdeacon is wearing

the chasuble he must put it off when he reads the Epistle, and when the reading is over he puts it on again. The deacon, however, when he comes forward to sing the Gospel puts off his chasuble, and folding it up throws it around his left shoulder, fastening the other extremity with the girdle of the alb. When the Communion is over he reassumes his chasuble before the Collect is finished.[1]

What is a much more puzzling point is the question why chasubles were worn at all in the place of the ordinary dalmatics. One explanation, which is that given by De Vert, insists that the dalmatic was in its own nature an undergarment. A bishop wears two dalmatics besides his alb, and over that a chasuble. On the other hand the chasuble was an outer garment, a sort of cloak. Now one gathers from the *Ordines Romani* of the early middle ages that the deacons wore dalmatics when they did not go beyond the Lateran Basilica, but when they went in procession to assist the Pontiff in the stational Masses of the winter season, and had to spend more time in the open air, they wore chasubles to protect them against accidents of weather. During Lent and Advent, despite the inconveniences of rain and mud, the Roman Pontiff said Mass, not in his own Basilica, but at one of the churches in the city, where the station was kept. The deacons and subdeacons went with him, and on

[1] Migne, *P.L.* 137, 489.

such occasions wore in consequence not their dalmatics but chasubles.

Unfortunately this explanation does not quite meet the facts. It cannot be said that the sacred ministers always wore dalmatics when they went out of doors in winter. They wore dalmatics, we are told, when the Bishop himself wore dalmatics under his chasuble. It seems then to have been a question of the liturgical character of the particular occasion. During the penitential season the white dalmatics commonly associated with rejoicing and conspicuous with their rich crimson stripe, were not worn, as being unsuitable to an occasion of mourning. They were accordingly replaced by sombre-coloured chasubles the chasuble being at that date a vestment, which, like the cope in our times, was by no means confined to the higher order of the clergy. This is the view of Fr. Joseph Braun, a high authority on the subject of vestments,[1] and it may be accepted as on the whole the most probable, even while we recognize that it is open to many difficulties.

The Lenten Communions

Perhaps one of the most curious proofs of the fact that the lenten liturgy must at some time before the eighth century have been subjected

[1] Braun, *Die priesterlichen Gewänder*, p. 147.

to a systematic revision is derived from the antiphons sung after Communion in the lenten Masses. We shall notice, if we glance at the series, that a very simple law must have originally guided their selection, although at some later date many isolated interferences with the law may be noted. It is confessed that the Thursdays in Lent are not to be regarded, for we know for certain that they were without any liturgical character until the time of Pope Gregory II (715–731). So also we need not pay any attention to the Sundays, for they belong to a different system, a different stratum, so to speak, in the evolution of the liturgy. But excluding Sundays and Thursdays we find that at some time or other the authority who drew up the antiphonal portion of the Masses must have selected a verse from each psalm in succession to serve for the Communion antiphon, which is sung in the Mass. Thus on Ash Wednesday a verse from the first psalm is prescribed for the Communion, on the Friday it is a verse from the second psalm ; and so on, in some sense without a flaw, until we come to the time of Holy Week itself. But this will probably be made more intelligible by printing in two columns the list of the Lent Communions, omitting Sunday and Thursday, with a brief indication of their *provenance*.

Ash Wednesday	Ps. 1.
Thursday after Ash Wednesday. . . .	
Friday „ „ „	Ps. 2.
Saturday „ „ „	Ps. 2.

1st Sunday in Lent	
Monday after 1st Sunday	St. Matt. 25. (Ps. 3.)
Tuesday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 4.
Wednesday,, ,, ,,	Ps. 5.
Thursday ,, ,, ,,	
Friday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 6.
Saturday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 7.
2nd Sunday in Lent	
Monday after 2nd Sunday	Ps. 8.
Tuesday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 9.
Wednesday,, ,, ,,	Ps. 10.
Thursday ,, ,, ,,	
Friday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 11.
Saturday ,, ,, ,,	St. Luke 15. (Ps. 12.)
3rd Sunday in Lent	
Monday after 3rd Sunday	Ps. 13.
Tuesday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 14.
Wednesday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 15.
Thursday ,, ,, ,,	
Friday ,, ,, ,,	St. John 4. (Ps. 16.)
Saturday ,, ,, ,,	St. John 8. (Ps. 17.)
4th Sunday in Lent	
Monday after 4th Sunday	Ps. 18.
Tuesday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 19.
Wednesday ,, ,, ,,	St. John 9. (Ps. 20.)
Thursday ,, ,, ,,	
Friday ,, ,, ,,	St. John 11. (Ps. 21.)
Saturday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 22.
Passion Sunday	
Monday in Passion Week	Ps. 23.
Tuesday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 24.
Wednesday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 25.
Thursday ,, ,, ,,	
Friday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 26.
Saturday ,, ,, ,,	Ps. 26.
Palm Sunday	

A very little study of this list will show that some law has originally presided over the selection

of these antiphons. It has no doubt in some cases been set aside, but the clearest traces are left of its pre-existence. Take, for instance, the Friday and Saturday preceding the fourth Sunday in Lent. Both of these are quite out of order. On Friday we have an extract from St. John, chapter 4, on Saturday a verse from the 8th chapter of the same. If the law had been observed, the Communion of the Friday ought to have been taken from the sixteenth Psalm and that of the Saturday from the seventeenth; but though on these two days some more recent corrector has introduced an extract from another source, possibly because it seemed to him more especially appropriate to the office of the day, still on the Monday the Communion is taken from the eighteenth Psalm, just as if the order had never been interrupted. All this is very significant. It shows that some one hand had originally organized the whole, but that before the time of Gregory II (715–731) a number of substitutions had been made, mostly sentences from the Gospel of the day. This would seem to throw back the original revision to something near the time of Gregory the Great. Not to delay further, I will only note that in the week preceding the first Sunday the Saturday is apparently not counted. The series begins on Ash Wednesday: and if we included both the Friday and Saturday of the same week, we ought to have Psalm v. on the Tuesday and not Psalm iv.

This is probably no oversight or blunder, but it points to the fact that the system was organized at that precise stage in the lenten development when only two fast-days were known in the anticipatory half week. And this same arrangement, curiously enough, is attested by a fragment of an early *Ordo* which has been published by Mgr. Batiffol. 'The first fast,' says the writer, speaking of Rome, 'takes place on the Wednesday and Friday after Quinquagesima.' [1]

The Catechumens

Among the most powerful influences which have been at work in shaping the existing liturgy of Lent must undoubtedly be reckoned the preparation of the Catechumens for the reception of Holy Baptism. This, in accordance with a tradition dating back to Apostolic times, was commonly administered on Easter Eve; but before the converts from Judaism or Paganism were allowed to present themselves at the font a systematic course of probation had necessarily to be gone through. It is not surprising that during all the days preceding the Church should have her eyes continually fixed upon the needs of these new recruits, who required to be by turns instructed, strengthened, warned, tested, and above all helped at every difficulty by the prayers of the faithful. It would seem from a passage in Tertullian that already in his time the pre-

[1] Batiffol, *History of the Roman Breviary* (Eng. Trans.), p. 366.

paration of the neophytes lasted forty days, and this, it seems to me, is to be accounted as a strong argument on the side of those who contend that the institution of Lent must be traced back to a very early date. Of the didactic and admonitory part of this preparation an excellent picture has been left us, so far as regards the Eastern Church, in the catechetical discourses of St. Cyril of Jerusalem. But as this subject is too vast to allow me to discuss it in any detail, I must confine myself here to the outward ceremonial.

For modern Catholics, to whom the word baptism recalls no other picture than that of a tiny infant beside the font in the arms of its godmother, it requires an effort of the imagination to conceive how much was done in the early Church to invest this rite of Christian initiation with every sort of solemnity. Even the instruction of a convert from Anglicanism at the present day affords no sort of parallel to the preparation deemed necessary of old, in the case of the Jews and pagans, from whose curiosity in many respects the Christian mysteries had to be jealously guarded. Complete 'illumination,' to use a word which was technically employed in the Eastern Church as almost a synonym for baptism, was only imparted after two years' preparation and by slow degrees. At every stage the catechumen was wisely made to feel the unspeakable value

of that which was being conferred upon him in his admission into the Church of Christ. At every stage he was tested to see whether he were really worthy of the privileges of sonship; and during the last three weeks of his catechumenate, some little ceremony was gone through almost every other day, marking an advance towards the climax of that wonderful Easter vigil, when at last took place the triple immersion in the newly consecrated water, and the sacramental words were spoken which washed away all stains and invested him with the spotless robe of sanctifying grace. Any one who studies the long and complicated form for the baptism of adults, which still stands in the Roman *Rituale*, will readily understand that this multiplicity of details preserves the memory of a series of different examinations and ceremonies formerly assigned to different days and indeed incapable of being performed on one occasion if a considerable number of catechumens had to be baptized together. With regard to these ceremonies there was no doubt a good deal of diversity of practice in primitive times, not only between East and West, but between the different Churches of the West, e.g. Rome and Milan, Africa and Gaul; still, as Mgr. Duchesne points out,[1] there is also a great deal which was common to every rite. There was in the first place a formal

[1] *Christian Worship*, pp. 331, seq.

admission to the catechumenate, now principally represented by the ceremonies which take place at the church door before the adult candidate for baptism is led into the baptistery. Amongst these may specially be noted the insufflation (breathing into the face of the catechumen), certain exorcisms and the preliminary signing with the Cross. These rites are found almost everywhere, but the ancient Roman ceremony of the giving of the salt,[1] which is a noticeable feature in our modern ritual, was not of universal observance in the early centuries.

Then, after the third Sunday of Lent those who during the past two years or more had given satisfaction and had profited by the instructions received, were elevated to the dignity of *electi* (chosen ones), and during this last stage of their preparation they went through a ritual which appears in a condensed form in the second portion of our present service. Apart from renewed exorcisms and instructions we may note in particular the solemn delivery and recital of the Creed—in several parts of the world the *Pater Noster*, a portion of the Gospel, and two of the psalms were formally imparted in the same way—and after that the renunciation of the devil.

Lastly, just before baptism there was a *consignatio* (signing with the Cross) of the organs of sense

[1] St. Augustine refers to this as an important rite in his day, and calls it 'the Sacrament (i.e. Consecration) of catechumens.' *De Catechiz. Rudibus*, chap. xxvi.

—sometimes with oil, sometimes, as at Rome, with saliva[1]—and also an anointing the breast and between the shoulders, followed by a final profession of faith in the form of replies to a threefold interrogation. This last ceremony was of universal use. To it succeeded the actual administration of baptism after the solemn blessing of the font, and in this the practice of a triple immersion was nearly everywhere observed in the early centuries. After the baptism came an anointing with Chrism, the signing with the Cross from which Baptism probably came to be called the σφραγίς, or seal, and, lastly, the imposition of hands. But with the details and variants of these ceremonies we need not now concern ourselves. My principal object is to illustrate the profound interest with which the catechumens were regarded, and to make it clear that their final initiation into the mysteries of the Christian faith was as much an object of attention to the Church at this season as the annual commemoration of our Saviour's Passion and Resurrection. It is no wonder, then, if we find upon a careful study of the Mass-books of our own and earlier ages that the thought of the needs of the catechumens has left deep traces in the lenten liturgy. The days of the 'scrutinies'—the special meetings con-

[1] In this the priest when touching the ears said '*ephpheta*' (be thou opened). At Rome and Milan the eph heta took place on Easter Eve itself; in Spain on Palm Sunday; see Morin, *Liber Comicus*, p. 411.

secrated to the instruction and examination of the candidates for baptism (*competentes*)—are generally noticeable for some remote or immediate reference to this Sacrament, whether it be in the choice of the Epistle and Gospel or through some allusion in the prayers or antiphons. Mgr. Duchesne is even inclined to believe that the thought of the due preparation of the catechumens is responsible, more than any other cause, for the development of the penitential season of Lent and the fast attached to it. It was as much for the *competentes* as for themselves that the faithful made supplication and mortified their appetites, and during the whole week which followed Easter we may notice that the Church even now gives thanks for those who had been baptized on Easter Eve, and who are still supposed to be wearing their white baptismal robes.[1]

The references to the catechumens are of course much more abundant and more direct in the early liturgies than in our present Missal. In the Gelasian Sacramentary, for instance, at the beginning of the period when the scrutinies were held, i.e. the third Sunday in Lent, we find that the priest is instructed to make a special insertion in the Canon of the Mass at the Memento for the

[1] Low Sunday is called in Latin the *Dominica in albis*, the Sunday in white, or probably more correctly *in albis deponendis*, the Sunday for laying aside the white. The newly baptized are especially mentioned in the special *Communicantes* and *Hanc igitur* of the Easter octave.

living, praying even for those who are to act as god-parents to the children who will be baptized on Easter Eve. And in the still more sacred *Hanc igitur*, immediately before the Consecration, he is instructed to say :

We beseech Thee therefore, O Lord, to receive favourably this oblation which we offer Thee in behalf of Thy servants and handmaidens whom Thou hast vouchsafed to number, to elect and to call [1] to eternal life, and the blessed gift of Thy grace. Through Christ our Lord. *Here the names of the elect are recited. After they have been recited, thou must say* : We beseech Thee, O Lord, that these who are to be made new at the font by holy baptism may by the gift of Thy Spirit be prepared for the fulness of Thy Sacraments. Through, etc.[2]

And it would seem from the rubric of the Mass which next follows in the Sacramentary that this special intercession in the most solemn part of the Holy Sacrifice was repeated every day until Maundy Thursday. In our modern Missal the references are not so obvious, and are only survivals of the older discipline. But it is easy to see the application of such a suite of lessons as may be found on the Wednesday in the fourth week of Lent, and we may assume that it is their connexion with the 'great scrutiny' which is

[1] It will be remembered that the *competentes* or candidates who were to be admitted to baptism were called *electi* (chosen ones).

[2] Gelasian Sacramentary, Ed. Wilson, p. 34.

responsible for the quite exceptional feature of a third reading assigned to that day, over and above the ordinary Epistle and Gospel.

Here, for instance, after an Introit in which occur the words: 'I will pour over you clean water, and ye shall be cleansed from all your defilements,' is the first of these lessons taken from the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel:

Thus saith the Lord God, I will sanctify my great name which was profaned among the Gentiles, which you have profaned in the midst of them: that the Gentiles may know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord of Hosts, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the Gentiles, and will gather you together out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. And I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness; and I will cleanse you from all your idols. And I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in the midst of you, and I will cause you to walk in my commandments, and to keep my judgments and do them; and you shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people and I will be your God, saith the Almighty.

It cannot be necessary to insist upon the very natural application of all this to those who were called out of paganism to be enrolled as the sons

of God and co-heirs of Jesus Christ. Hardly less obvious are the allusions in the extract from Isaias which immediately follows.

Thus saith the Lord God, Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes; cease to do perversely, learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge for the fatherless, defend the widow. And then come and accuse me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool. If you be willing and will hearken to me, you shall eat the good things of the land, saith the Lord Almighty.

With these lessons are associated two Graduals, one of which borrows these words from the Psalms:

Come, children, hearken to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Come ye to Him, and be enlightened; and your face shall not be confounded.

And the other similarly:

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; the people whom He hath chosen for His inheritance.

Then follows the Gospel, which consists of St. John's account of the healing of the man born blind (St. John ix. 1–38), who washed in the pool of Siloe and was anointed with spittle, even as the senses are anointed with spittle

in the ceremony of the Ephpheta. No one who is at all familiar with the tone of thought of early Christian literature, and the constant use of the word φωτισθέντες (the illuminated) for those who have been baptized amid the bright lights of the Easter vigil, can doubt of the appropriateness of the extract for its special purpose.

It would take long to track down all the minor surviving traces of the liturgy of the scrutinies—such an Offertory, for instance, as that of the Tuesday in the third week in Lent, *Dextera Domini fecit virtutem*, etc. At present it must be admitted with regret that the connexion between baptism and Lent is of interest chiefly on account of the associations of the past. Although a few baptisms are still performed here and there in cathedral churches on Holy Saturday after the blessing of the font, the rite as a part of the Easter ceremonial is practically obsolete.

Mid-Lent Sunday

Mid-Lent receives little recognition in this country at the present day, although abroad in some places its extravagances almost vie with those of the carnival.[1] But the note of joy in the Church's liturgy is unmistakable, and it appears not merely in the Introit *Lætare Jerusalem*—

[1] Dom Germain Morin has traced an interesting connexion between this celebration and the Eastern festival of Mid-Pentecost. Cf. Nilles, *Calendarium*, vol. ii. p. 346.

Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and meet together, all you who love her; rejoice exceedingly, you who have been in sorrow, that you may leap for joy, and be satiated with comfort from her breasts—

But the same glad spirit rings out also in the Gradual—

I rejoiced at the things that were said to me; we shall go into the house of the Lord.

O let peace be in thy strength, and abundance in thy towers.

They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion. He shall not be moved for ever that dwelleth in Jerusalem.

Canon Oakeley, in his *Lyra Liturgica*, has well expressed the emotion which the day suggests:

What! words of joy so soon,
With penance scarce begun?
As yet one lagging Lenten moon
Its course hath barely run;
And Holy Church, with kind maternal voice,
Our weary spirits cheers, and bids us e'en rejoice.

God wills no sinner's death,
And tempers o'er his pain;
The sword long slumbers in its sheath,
Nor wounds but for our gain;
And ere it pierce us through, some mandate stays
The avenging hand, and still the stroke in hope delays.

To the ordinary layman the joyful associations of the day are most conspicuously brought to his notice by the use of the organ and by the rose-coloured vestments which are worn in our larger churches. What, it may be asked, is the origin of this latter usage? It does not seem possible to answer with absolute certainty, but I think that it is probably to be traced to the ceremony of the blessing of the Golden Rose, which for some centuries past has taken place on this day at the Papal court. In the essay which G. Cenni has devoted to the history of the Golden Rose he seems to show conclusively that the use of rose-coloured vestments is later than the time of Paris de Grassis, who was Papal master of ceremonies in the reign of Leo X (1521).[1] Now the ceremony of the Golden Rose is certainly many centuries older than this, and it seems in every way probable, though I am not aware that any conclusive evidence on the point has yet been produced, that in the course of the sixteenth century a shade of light purple was by degrees adopted at Rome for the vestments of this day, which seemed to harmonize with the function peculiar to this occasion. From the Papal chapel the custom presumably extended first to the other churches in the city, and thence throughout the Catholic world. It should, however, be noted that the use of rose-coloured vestments during Lent is

[1] G. Cenni, *Dissertazioni*, i. p. 264.

not unknown elsewhere. At Milan this colour is employed for the Mass on the Saturday in Passion week, *sabbato in traditione symboli*, as it used to be called, because the Creed was delivered to the catechumens on the great *scrutinium* of that day. Hence it is possible that the Roman usage is nothing more than an outward manifestation of the joy already abundantly indicated in the liturgy of *Lætare* Sunday.

With regard to the Golden Rose itself, the earliest trace which has yet been discovered seems to be found in a Bull of St. Leo IX in 1049,[1] from which we gather that that Pontiff, having inherited the monastery of Holy Cross in his native province of Alsace, released it from all services and obligations, receiving it under the immediate jurisdiction of the Holy See. In return for this the Pope imposed upon the monks the tribute of a Golden Rose, which was to be sent to him every year, that he might carry it in his hand when he rode in procession from the Lateran palace to the Basilica of the Holy Cross, (to which the Alsatian monastery was also dedicated,) where, on the fourth Sunday in Lent, the station was regularly held. Several authors have appealed to this incident as if it were itself the origin of the ceremony of the Golden Rose, but the terms of the Bull clearly exclude such a sug-

[1] There seems to be no question as to the authenticity of this Bull. It is fully summarized by Jaffe-Löwenfeld, *Regesta*, without any note of suspicion.

gestion, for the custom is spoken of as already existing.

We must, therefore, look in some other direction for an explanation of the beginning of this practice, and I am inclined to conjecture that we have here some trace of an ancient commemoration of the victory of Spring over Winter. The idea of a battle between Winter and Spring, or, as the Germans would have it, Summer, was deeply rooted in the folklore of central Europe. Throughout all the middle ages the custom seems to have prevailed of representing this battle on Mid-Lent Sunday by some mimic contest, which most frequently took the shape of belabouring a hideous effigy of Winter with sticks and stones and finally of hurling it into the water.[1] With this also seems to have been associated in other places a vague recollection of the overthrow of paganism in Poland (A.D. 965), when the Catholic Duke Miecislaus destroyed the pagan idols and threw them into the river on *Lætare* Sunday.[2] Supposing this day to have been in any way identified with the triumph of Summer, those who are best acquainted with the burlesque sports tolerated in Rome in the tenth century will not find it difficult to believe that the occasion was in some way commemorated, while the carrying

[1] See Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie* (Ed. 2*a*), pp. 720–734; Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung*, *s.v.* Sommer; Ducange, *s.v.* Fonta.

[2] See Nilles' *Kalendarium Manuale*, vol. ii. p. 145.

of a Golden Rose by the Pontiff in the solemn procession of that day would be a natural and appropriate recognition of the event. There seems no reason to believe that in the earlier centuries any form of blessing was prescribed for this occasion ; but the carrying of the rose was nevertheless the great liturgical feature of the ceremony, and it was customary for the Pope on reaching the Holy Cross Basilica to preach to the people on this theme. A sermon of Pope Innocent III, delivered under these circumstances, is still preserved to us ; from which I venture to make this brief extract :

To prevent God's faithful people (says the Pontiff) from sinking under the continued strain through the severity of the lenten abstinence, on this Mid-Lent Sunday a certain respite and relaxation is introduced, in order that the effort thus mitigated may be borne more cheerfully. The office of this day is full of gladness, a note of joy dominates the whole. . . . The change is fittingly indicated in the properties of the flower which you see here before you. There is brightness in colour, sweetness in perfume, and delight in its savour. Before all other flowers the rose charms by its hue, it cheers by its odour, it comforts by its taste. The sight is gladdened, the scent is refreshed, the palate is flattered. But because the spirit quickeneth and the flesh profiteth nothing, let us turn from carnal to spiritual things. This blossom here is emblematic of that other flower which says of itself in the Canticles : ' I am the flower of the

field and the lily of the valleys.' . . . In this blossom we may recognize three elements: the gold, the musk and the balsam. It is by means of the balsam that the musk is attached to the gold. And so in Christ there is a threefold substance: the divinity, the body and the soul; but it is by means of the soul that the body is joined to the divinity, for the divine nature is of such refinement that it could never be united to a body formed of clay, unless a rational and spiritual substance acted as a medium.[1]

It will, of course, be gathered from this that the practice of perfuming the Golden Rose with musk and balsam was older than the pontificate of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216). Indeed, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, after the present formula of benediction had been introduced, it seems that the rose was for a time anointed with chrism, and Julius II, in sending the Golden Rose to Henry VIII, wrote in a letter to Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, 'We are sending to him (Henry) the Golden Rose anointed with sacred chrism, sprinkled with fragrant musk and blessed with our own hands, after the custom of the Roman Pontiffs.' But the use of chrism in the ceremony has been discontinued since the pontificate of Paul III. The practice of presenting this rose, after it has served the Pope for the procession on *Lætare* Sunday, to some prince or princess or to some holy shrine dates back to the days of Urban II, who bestowed

[1] Migne, *P.L.* vol. 217, p. 393.

it in 1096 upon Fulk of Anjou on the occasion of the preaching of the first crusade. The form of blessing, however, which is now in use is much more recent, dating only from the fifteenth century. It seems to have been deliberately modelled upon the sermon of Innocent III, from which I have quoted above, and runs thus:

O God! by whose Word and power all things were created, and by whose will they are all governed; O Thou, that art the joy and gladness of all Thy faithful people; we beseech Thy Divine Majesty, that Thou vouchsafe to bless and sanctify this Rose, so lovely in its beauty and fragrance. We are to bear it this day in our hands as a symbol of spiritual joy; that thus the people that is devoted to Thy service, being set free from the captivity of Babylon, by the grace of Thy only-begotten Son, who is the glory and the joy of Israel, may show forth with a sincere heart the joys of that Jerusalem which is above and is our Mother. And whereas Thy Church seeing this symbol exults with joy, for the glory of Thy name; do Thou, O Lord, give her true and perfect happiness. Accept her devotion, forgive us our sins, increase our faith; heal us by Thy Word, protect us by Thy mercy; remove all obstacles, grant us all blessings; that thus this same, Thy Church, may offer unto Thee the fruit of good works; and walking in the odour of the fragrance of that Flower which sprang from the Rod of Jesse, and is called the flower of the field and the lily of the valley, may she deserve to enjoy an endless bliss in the bosom of heavenly glory,

in the society of all the saints, together with that Divine Flower, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.[1]

Very few specimens seem to survive of the Golden Roses which were made for the popes in mediæval times. M. Eugène Müntz has, however, collected some interesting details regarding them and their cost as works of art, and he gives an illustration of one such rose, now preserved in the Museum of Cluny, which was originally presented by Pope Clement V, about 1310, to the Cathedral of Bâle. During the fourteenth century, as he estimates, these roses weighed on the average from 300 to 350 grammes each and cost a sum equivalent to some £250 of our money. Some of them, however, were much more expensive, especially in the time of the antipope Clement VII, and their value approached £800 or £1,000. Generally there was not merely a single blossom, but a spray or branch, in which one central flower was surrounded with half a dozen buds and fifty or sixty leaves.[2] Curiously enough they were nearly always set, not with rubies, but with one or more sapphires. One such rose, of which we have rather a minute description preserved to us,[3] was given by Pius II to John II of Aragon in

[1] Guéranger (Shepherd), *Liturgical Year*, Lent, p. 328.

[2] E. Müntz in the *Revue de l'Art Chrétien*, 1901, pp. 1–11.

[3] See Fita, *Diitario de la Disputacion de Cataluña*: and Girbal. *La Rosa de' Oro*, pp. 37–38.

1460. It weighed two marks and a half and was from three and a half to four palms high. This would probably represent a weight of over 600 grammes, or nearly a pound and a quarter, and a height of about two and a half feet.

The Tract, and the Prayer over the People

Two features in the lenten liturgy which are almost peculiar to this season may also perhaps claim a word of notice here. Unfortunately it is not possible in either case to explain exactly why these particular modifications of the ritual should be practically unknown outside of Lent, but the fact of their presence ought to be recognized. The first point to which I refer is the introduction of the 'Tract' after the Gradual, a feature which appears on Septuagesima Sunday, and is continued on Sundays and feasts throughout Lent, occurring even in the ferial or weekday Masses on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.[1] As we have already seen, the limitation to these three days of the week probably points to the fact, that the Tract must have been originally introduced at a period when the liturgy was not celebrated daily during Lent and probably takes us back to the days before St. Gregory's reform. But this, of course, tells us nothing as to the

[1] The Tract also makes its appearance on the Saturdays in the Ember weeks and in Masses for the dead.

reason of the adoption of this particular form of psalmody in preference to any other. Neither does the nature of this musical development in itself throw any further light upon the problem. It would seem according to the conclusions of the best authorities [1] that the '*psalmus tractus*' (the psalm drawn or prolonged), of which the word 'Tract' is the convenient abbreviation, is not to be derived from the drawling style of music, which some have imagined to be its characteristic, but is opposed to the *psalmus responsorius* or responsory psalm. In the responsory psalm one choir answered another, or the cantors reading certain verses were answered by the whole body of the choir; but in the Tract the whole psalm was sung by a single voice, or by two or more voices singing together without any break. It is just conceivable that this manner of singing was found most suitable when a large part of the assembly consisted of neophytes, who were as yet unfamiliar with the words of the psalms and were unable to take their natural share in the chanting. In this way the *Tract* may have been adopted by preference at those times, when, owing to the scrutinies or some other reason, the catechumens were expected to form an unusually large proportion of the congregation present, as might be expected to happen during Lent. But this is mere conjecture and does not account for the

[1] See Bäumer, *Geschichte des Breviers*, p. 123.

appearance of this feature on Ember days and in Masses for the dead.

On the other hand it is noteworthy, as Mgr. Duchesne has pointed out,[1] that while the Gradual is usually intimately associated with the Tract, there are certain days—the Ember Wednesday and Saturday during the first week in Lent might be quoted as an illustration—when the Gradual is separated from the Tract by an intervening lesson. This points to the fact that the present normal association of Gradual and Tract or Gradual and Alleluia has resulted from the omission of one of the original lessons. As we are shown by the liturgy of Good Friday and that of several of the Ember days, it appears that there were normally three Scripture lessons in the earliest form of the liturgy; i.e. besides the Epistle and the Gospel there was also commonly an extract from the Old Testament which preceded them. This feature may still be traced in the Spanish and Ambrosian rites, and it has left numerous traces of its presence in other directions. The Gradual was originally inserted between the Old Testament lesson and the Epistle, the Tract or Alleluia between the Epistle and the Gospel; when one of the two earlier lessons was suppressed the Gradual and Tract were brought together and sung in immediate sequence. This is now, of course, the almost universal arrangement throughout the year.

[1] Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 168.

With regard to the *Prayer over the People* much cannot be said. As a liturgical feature it is undoubtedly very ancient, and in the Leonine Sacramentary, which probably represents the Roman practice of the fifth century, the *Oratio super Populum* is by no means, as at present, confined to Lent. The most probable explanation seems to be that the prayer called the Post-Communion was intended more directly, as its contents almost invariably show, for those who had actually received Communion. The *Oratio super Populum* with its preliminary notice *Humiliate capita vestra Deo* (Bow down your heads before God) was as clearly intended for those who had not communicated, and may very possibly have been first introduced when the practice of all the people communicating with the priest fell into desuetude, and it was felt that a special intercession ought to be made for that considerable proportion of the congregation, who had assisted at, but not partaken of, the Holy Mysteries. Possibly the lenten discipline which debarred so many from Holy Communion while they assumed the character of voluntary penitents may have served to confine the use of the Prayer over the People exclusively to this season.

CHAPTER V

Palm Sunday

It is a regrettable fact that in many of our Catholic churches the oldest and certainly the most interesting portion of the ritual of Palm Sunday is too often not carried out. The whole essence of the ceremonies peculiar to this day lies in the *procession*. Without the procession, the blessing and the distribution of the palms are stripped of more than half their meaning. Although we can only admire the piety which leads the faithful to preserve jealously throughout the year the little sprig of box or yew which falls to their lot, almost as if they regarded it as the palm which they hope to carry in heaven for all eternity, it may certainly be said that it was not *originally* the idea of the Church in blessing those green boughs that they should be kept like Agnus Deis or holy water in the houses of the laity. The boughs were consecrated simply to be used in the procession, and the older rubrics prescribed that the blessed palm was to be given back as an offering to the priest at the Offertory of the Mass

which follows, just as to this day in the ordination service the candidates present to the bishop the candles which they have been holding in their hands. However, this remark is not meant to denounce the practice of carrying home and preserving the palms, a practice which has now been consecrated by usage in almost every part of the Church. My intention is only to insist that the central point of the ceremonial in this commemoration of our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem is not the distribution of boughs, but the procession in which they are carried.

Antiquity of the Palm Sunday Ceremonial

Before we come to a description of the ceremonial for Palm Sunday a word must be said on its antiquity. Looking to our earliest documents, there is every reason to believe that in the East, in Jerusalem at any rate, the practice of celebrating the Sunday before Easter with a procession of palms dates back to Apostolic times, or at the least to the very earliest period at which it was possible for Christians to practise their worship in public. There seems to be an allusion to the service of palms in St. Cyril of Jerusalem's catechetical discourses delivered some twenty years after the death of the Emperor Constantine. But be that as it may, Egeria, the pilgrim lady from Spain, who visited the holy places about the year 380, gives us a full description of the whole

ceremony as she witnessed it in Jerusalem itself. In the afternoon of the Sunday before Easter, she tells us, the whole population of the city went out to the Mount of Olives. There they gathered round the bishop at the place where our Lord ascended into heaven, while antiphons were sung suited to the spot and the occasion, with many prayers and readings from holy Scripture. Thence they walked back in procession to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, 'escorting the bishop,' she says, 'in the same figure in which our Lord was escorted.' To use her own words :

And when after long prayers it begins to be about six o'clock, that passage in the gospel is read aloud in which the children with branches and palms greeted our Lord crying, *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.* And straightway the bishop rises, and all the people with him, and thence they go from the summit of Mount Olivet, the whole way on foot, the people walking before Him with psalms and antiphons and continually singing the refrain, *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.* And all the children in these places, even those that cannot yet walk, because they are so young, are carried by their parents in their arms, all with boughs, some of olive, some of palm, and in that way they bring the bishop to the city, just as the crowds escorted our Lord.

It was in this most vivid and touching way that the early Christians of Jerusalem recalled upon the actual spot the scene of our Lord's

triumphal entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week. This procession was soon copied by other Churches, first of all in the East and then somewhat later in the West. The fact that in the ninth and tenth centuries such ceremonies were observed not only at Constantinople but in England, Germany and Spain, and that they were everywhere very much alike, affords strong presumption of the antiquity of the custom, even though we do not find it explicitly mentioned in the Roman *Ordines* or Mass Books. Of the Greek rite, for instance, Codinus tells us: 'On the feast of Palms, while the Matins are yet being sung, a procession takes place, and there must be a litany according to custom, and the emperor must walk in the procession. The lampadarius leads the way with a burning torch, a deacon bearing the Gospels follows; then come the bishop and priests carrying icons (images), and some of the people walk after them.'[1] During this procession an antiphon was sung which is said to have been composed by the Emperor Theophilus, 829–842. It contained the words, 'Come forth, ye nations, come forth also, ye people, look upon the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel comes as a figure of Christ.' After the procession the Matins were continued, but those who assisted held the palms in their

[1] *Codinus de Officiis*, x, 5, xi. 4. An icon has a flat surface, but is not necessarily painted. It is not, therefore, strictly either a picture or an image.

hands throughout the service. A similar rite is still observed in the Greek Church at the present day.

With regard to Western Christendom, although we cannot appeal to anything quite so definite as the testimony of Egeria at Jerusalem, still the evidence suggests that the procession of palms was introduced at an extremely early date. We find it widely established in the ninth and tenth centuries, and earlier documents seem to assume something of the sort without explicitly describing it.[1] I might appeal for example to the last stanza of the ancient hymn *Magno salutis gaudio*, traditionally ascribed to St. Gregory the Great, but possibly the composition of his contemporary Venantius Fortunatus, or some other Christian poet of that age. Here at any rate are two or three stanzas as they appear in Mr. Copeland's translation. The verses, of course, refer primarily to the Jewish crowd meet-

[1] There is seemingly a reference to it in the Gregorian Sacramentary. The name occurs also very early not only in the form *Dominica in ramis palmarum*, but also as *Domineka in Olivo* (see *Revue Bénédictine*, July 1893). St. Gregory of Tours, A.D. 594, in his book of miracles connects the triumphant entry of our Lord into Jerusalem with the Sunday before Easter in a very significant way. Moreover St. Isidore of Seville in Spain, A.D. 610, and St. Aldhelm in England, A.D. 709, who mention 'Palm Sunday,' both seem to be thinking of a procession. Perhaps, however, the strongest evidence of the early date of the Palm procession in the West is a feature pointed out by Dom Morin in a lectionary of the North of Italy akin to the Milanese rite, in which two Gospels are assigned to Palm Sunday as in our present Mass. See *Revue Bénédictine*. October, 1903.

ing our Blessed Lord, not to any ecclesiastical procession.

From tender palm the gathering throng
The new cut branches bring,
With olives green they haste along
To meet th' immortal King.

Before, behind, in concourse run,
And in the Spirit's might,
'Hosanna,' cry, 'to David's Son,
Hosanna in the height.'

O let us thus run forth to greet
Th' almighty Judge and King,
And bearing palms of glory meet,
With childlike spirit sing.[1]

It is tempting to suppose that the writer, in his last stanza, was thinking of a literal, not a merely metaphorical bearing of palms to salute the coming of our Saviour on Palm Sunday.

The Stational Mass

If we open a Roman Missal or a Holy Week book and study carefully the blessing of the palms assigned to this day, we shall notice a rather remarkable sequence in the order of the

[1] Duffield, *Latin Hymns*, p. 108, assumes that the *Magno salutis gaudio* was certainly written by St. Gregory, but Manutius, in his more critical *Geschichte der christlich-lateinischen Poesie*, p. 387, does not include this among the very small number of hymns which he thinks can be traced to St. Gregory with any confidence.

prayers. It will be convenient to indicate the details here.

On the completion of terce the priest . . . proceeds to bless the branches of palm, olive or other trees placed either in the middle of the sanctuary in front of the altar or at the Epistle corner.

The choir sings,

HOSANNA Filio David : benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. O Rex Israel : Hosanna in excelsis.

HOSANNA to the Son of David : blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. O King of Israel : Hosanna in the highest.

Then the priest says,

Dominus vobiscum.
R. Et cum spiritu tuo.

The Lord be with you.
R. And with thy spirit.

Thereupon follows the prayer,

Deus quem diligere, etc.

The subdeacon then sings the following Lesson.

Lectio Libri Exodi, cap. xv. 27.

IN diebus illis, venerunt filii Israel, etc

The Lesson out of the Book of Exodus, chap. xv. 27.

IN those days the children of Israel, etc.

This Lesson is followed by the Responsorium Collegerunt pontifices et pharisæi *or* In monte Oliveti, etc. *Then the deacon sings the following Gospel, with the usual ceremonies before and after.*

Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Matthæum, cap. xxi.

IN illo tempore: cum appropinquasset Jesus Jerosolymis, et venisset Bethphage, ad montem Oliveti, etc.

A continuation of the holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, ch. xxi.

AT that time: when Jesus drew nigh to Jerusalem, and was come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet, etc.

This is of course the Gospel which describes our Lord's entry into Jerusalem seated upon an ass while the crowd waved palms and spread their garments in His way.

Then follows *Dominus vobiscum* and, after *Oremus*, another prayer, *Auge fidem*, etc.

The prayer ends as usual with *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum.* R. *Amen*, which are sung in the tone of the Preface. The priest proceeds in the same tone with the *Dominus vobiscum*, *Sursum corda*, *Vere dignum*, etc., exactly as in High Mass, ending with the slightly altered formula, *Cui assistunt angeli et archangeli*, etc.

After this the choir sings the *Sanctus.*

Then the priest says again *Dominus vobiscum*; *Oremus*, and the blessing prayer *Petimus Domine*, etc., followed by several others. The palms are next incensed and sprinkled with holy water, and then are distributed first to the clergy and then to the

laity.[1] During the distribution the anthems *Pueri Hebræorum*, etc., are sung.

Now a glance over this ceremony of the blessing of the palms will at once reveal an interesting fact. We have here almost the complete skeleton of the variable portion of the Mass. There is provided an Introit, a Collect, an Epistle, a Gradual, a Gospel, a Secret (i.e. a prayer over the offerings), a Preface with its *Sanctus* and then a number of benediction prayers. Even the *Dominus vobiscum* said after the *Credo*, with the curious *Oremus*, which is now followed in the Mass by no proper prayer until we come to the Secret, find themselves duly represented. What is the explanation of this curious feature? It has, I think, a very simple explanation, though the reader must pardon me if it seems to take us a good way back.

We have become so accustomed in this Protestant land to walking down an aisle and back again and calling it a procession, that we have almost lost sight of the original idea in the mind of the Church that a procession meant going somewhere, and implied somewhere to go to. I have already spoken at some length in a previous chapter of the Roman 'Stations,' and it will probably strike the reader without further discussion that we are here in the presence of something very analogous. No doubt most of the

[1] It may be noticed that in receiving the palm men should kiss the palm and then the priest's hand, and women the palm only.

processions in which the mediæval liturgies abound were modelled more or less upon the fundamental idea of which the Stations of the Roman Missal still preserve an indication. Certainly the Palm Sunday procession was not one of the exceptions. As we know from numerous mediæval records, the Palm Sunday service not only implied a cathedral or parish church in which the Mass of this Sunday was said and the Passion chanted after the procession, but it also included a place for the *station*, sometimes a church two or three miles distant, sometimes only a cross or an eminence in a neighbouring churchyard. When we remember that the cathedral was in ancient times technically called the 'Jerusalem' of the diocese, we shall at once see how aptly the passage from the station to the cathedral was conceived to represent our Saviour's journey from Bethany to the scene of His Passion. As we may note in the regulations given in that noble monument of monastic ceremonial, the *Concordia Regularis* of our English St. Æthelwold, the monks went out to a stational church and thence returned to the abbey church or the cathedral, and it was at the station and not at the cathedral that the palms were originally blessed and distributed. St. Æthelwold in his time says nothing of a Mass being sung at the station for the blessing of the palms, but that this was the earliest practice I think there can be no doubt. Beroldus lets us know that formerly

at Milan the palms were blessed in the Church of San Lorenzo, in which Mass was said by a priest, and then the Archbishop was conducted in the solemn palm procession to Sant Ambrogio, where he himself pontificated. Still more conclusive is the account preserved to us of St. Ulrick of Augsburg in the tenth century, who followed the Roman rite.[1] We are told that on Palm Sunday he went to a spot two or three miles away, and there said Mass and blessed the palms in order to come back in procession to the cathedral church.

There can be no doubt then that our Holy Week service preserves the skeleton of the stational Mass. This must have lost its sacrificial elements when the custom was gradually introduced of distributing the palms not at the station, but in the same church to which the procession ultimately returned for the Mass of the day. As for the six benedictory prayers the place where they were

1 On the day called *Dominica Indulgentiæ* or *Pascha Palmarum* (i.e. Palm Sunday), a station was made *ad collem qui dicitur Perleich*, where crowds used to meet from all the neighbourhood to hear a sermon and strew boughs in the way of the procession. Mass was offered in the place where the palms were blessed, and thence the procession escorted a 'figure (effigies) of our Lord seated upon an ass' back to the Cathedral. (See *Acta Sanctorum*, July, vol. ii. p. 103.) Many traces of similar Palm Sunday stations seem to be found in England. To take one example as a specimen of the rest. A writer in *Notes and Queries* (c. 1865) reports that : 'On St. Martin's Hill, near Marlborough, Palm Sunday is still kept, and persons in great numbers are used to assemble there, each carrying a hazel-nut bough with blossoms called catkins hanging from it.' *Notes and Queries*, series ii. vol. v. p. 447.

introduced into the stational Mass was probably just before the *Pater noster*, where that curious break occurs in the liturgy of the Mass at the words *Per quem* HÆC OMNIA. It is here that the consecration of the holy oils is begun in the Pontifical Mass on Maundy Thursday, and it is here that the eighth century pontifical of Egbert prescribes the blessing of animals and fruits of the earth.

The Blessing of the Palms

About the prayers with which the palms are blessed not much need be said. As was remarked above, the procession was the primary idea, but it was natural that the Church should in course of time provide some form of benediction for the boughs of trees, which make its most striking and distinctive feature. It is an almost universal law that the Church employs nothing in her services which she has not previously consecrated in some way or other. The earliest form of blessing palms preserved to us is probably that contained in the pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York from 732 to 766. This suggests that not only palms and the boughs of trees but that even flowers, the catkins of the willow perhaps, were used by our Saxon forefathers for the service of this day. After a reference of course to the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and also an allusion, which seems to occur in almost every form, to the green olive-

branch in the beak of the dove which was God's token of peace to Noah, announcing that the Divine anger was at an end, the prayer continues :

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to sanctify and bless these branches of palms and divers green shrubs or flowers, that all who take them in their hands may be able to please Thee, and may deserve at the last day to come before Thy judgment-seat with the palm of victory and the fruits of justice, so that receiving the gift of unfading glory they may continue for ever with Thee who art eternal life.

As for the symbolism of the branches of palm or olive I can only recommend the reader to study carefully in the Holy Week book the beautiful prayers for the blessing provided in the modern Roman Missal. They seem almost to exhaust all the helpful thoughts which could possibly connect themselves with the palm the emblem of victory, the olive the emblem of fertility, richness and peace, and the green boughs and flowers the emblem of youth and hope and innocence. For the rest we may let an ancient Saxon monk, Ælfric, the disciple of St. Æthelwold, instruct us upon the devotional feelings which the palm procession ought to arouse in our hearts. This sermon of Ælfric's, intended to be addressed not to monks but to the laity, is interesting from the clear witness it bears to the ancient practice already remarked upon of offering the palm to the

priest in the Mass, instead of taking it home to keep as we do.

The custom exists (says Ælfric) in God's Church, by its doctors established, that everywhere in God's congregation the priest should bless palm twigs on this day, and distribute them so blessed to the people ; and God's servants should then sing the hymn which the Jewish people sang before Christ when He was approaching to His Passion. We imitate the faithful of that people with this deed, for they bore palm twigs, with hymns before Jesus. Now we should hold our palm until the singer begins the offering-song, and then offer to God the palm for its betokening. Palm betokens victory. Victorious was Christ when He overcame the great devil, and rescued us ; and we should also be victorious, through God's might, so that we overcome our evil practices, and all sins, and the devil, and adorn ourselves with good works ; and at the end of our life deliver the palm to God, that is our victory, and thank Him fervently that we, through His succour, have overcome the devil, so that he could not deceive us.

St. Æthelwold, in the *Concordia Regularis*, is equally unfamiliar with any practice of keeping the palms ;[1] and a Cistercian Ordinal printed by Rock directs that the branches carried in the procession are to be placed upon a board whence

[1] 'Et teneant palmas in manibus usquedum offertorium cantetur. et eas post oblationem offerant sacerdoti.' Migne, *P.L.* 137, 489.

the sacristan is to clear them away.[1] It will no doubt be very properly objected that in the existing ritual for blessing the palms their preservation in private houses seems distinctly to be contemplated. The second benedictory prayer, *Deus qui dispersa congregas*, itself of the most venerable antiquity, speaks as follows:

Let us pray.

O God, who gatherest what is dispersed, and preservest what is gathered; who didst bless the people that carried boughs to meet Jesus; bless also these branches of the palm-tree and olive-tree, which thy servants take with faith for the honour of thy name: *that into whatever place they shall be brought, the inhabitants of that place may obtain thy benediction:* and thy right hand preserve from all adversity, and protect those that have been redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son, who liveth, etc.

However clearly this petition may seem to speak it is to be noted that the words italicized do not form part of the original prayer. In the Leofric Missal the clause is altogether wanting,[2] and in Egbert's Pontifical and the Rouen Benedictional, commonly supposed to have belonged to Archbishop Robert of Jumièges, we find an

1 'Ramos quos portant in manibus intrantibus (*sic*) chorum reponant super tabulam que est super gradum presbiterii posita. Que omnia sacrista continuo auferat.' *Church of our Fathers*, Ed. Hart and Frere, i. 420.

3 Leofric Missal, p. 90; Egbert's Pontifical, p. 135.

intermediate form which suggests that a blessing was invoked for all places visited in the procession,[1] but not necessarily that the palms were kept. Still, there can be no doubt that ecclesiastical tradition has long ago sanctioned the present practice, and that in pre-Reformation days both in Italy and Germany crosses of blessed palm were regarded as peculiarly efficacious as a protection against lightning. Both the reformer Franz Wessels of Stralsund[2] and Naogeorgus (Kirchmeyer) speak of this, and a more modern testimony referring to the practice in Spain may be quoted from the letters of Blanco White:

For use in the Churches (he writes), a number of palm-trees are kept with their branches tied up together, that by the want of light the more tender shoots may preserve a delicate yellow tinge. The ceremony of blessing these branches is solemnly performed by the officiating priest, previously to the procession, after which they are sent by the clergy to their friends, who tie them to the iron bars of the balconies to be, as they believe, a protection against lightning.

The Procession and the 'Gloria Laus'

After the distribution of the palms has been completed, the celebrant washes his hands and

[1] Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (H. Bradshaw Society), p. 12; the words *habitatores loci illius* do not occur.

[2] *Schilderung des Katholischen Gottesdienstes*, pp. 6–7.

chants a final prayer, having a more direct reference to our Lord's entry into Jerusalem than any which have preceded it. This naturally prepares the way for the procession. The rubrics in our Holy Week books run thus :

Next follows the procession. First the priest puts incense in the censer, and the deacon, turning to the people, says,

Procedamus in pace.	Let us go in peace.
R. In nomine Christi. Amen.	R. In the name of Christ. Amen.

The thurifer, or incense-bearer, goes first with the censer smoking, then follows the subdeacon with the cross between two acolytes with their candles burning, next the clergy in order, and last of all the priest, with the deacon on his left hand, all bearing palms in their hands.

Various very beautiful antiphons all turning upon our Saviour's triumph and the glad hosannas of the children are provided in the Missal to be sung during the procession. I will only notice for its historical interest a short clause which occurs in one of them :

Quantus est iste, cui throni et dominationes occurrunt ! Noli timere, filia Sion ; ecce Rex tuus venit tibi sedens super	How great is he whom the thrones and dominions go forth to meet ! Fear not, O daughter of Sion ; behold thy King cometh

pullum asinæ ; sicut scriptum est : Salve Rex fabricator mundi, qui venisti redimere nos.

to thee sitting on an ass's colt : as it is written : Hail, O King, Creator of the world, who art come to redeem us.

THE PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION IN A FRENCH CATHEDRAL.
(*From Picart.*)

A similar passage in a corresponding antiphon sung in mediæval English churches beginning not *Salve Rex* but *Ave Rex noster, Fili David*, was the occasion for a triple prostration before the cross—sometimes the 'palm cross' as it was

called, or *crux buxata*, in the churchyard, sometimes the processional cross uncovered for this occasion, sometimes before the great rood in the church. In this prostration palms and garments were thrown upon the ground and not unfrequently handfuls of flowers,[1] as we do now before the Blessed Sacrament. The practice, under Lollard criticism, was apparently found to suggest difficulties to the mind of the common people on account of these marks of honour paid to a lifeless image; and in a well known manual of popular instruction, *Dives and Pauper*, written at the beginning of the fifteenth century, we have this question asked and answered:

Dives. On palme sondaye at procession the priest draweth up the veyle before the rode, and falleth down to the ground with all the people and saith thrice *Ave Rex Noster*, 'Hayle be Thou our King,' and so he worshippeth that image as a king.

Pauper. Absit. God forbid. He speaketh not to the image that the carpenter hath made and the painter painted, but if (unless) the priest be a fool, for that stock or stone was never king, but he speaketh to Him who died upon the cross for us all, to Him that is King of all things.[2]

[1] In this has originated a practice still perpetuated, without the least idea of its origin and significance, in many parts of South Wales, where the people on Palm Sunday go to scatter flowers on the graves in the churchyard. Cf. p. 222 below.

[2] *Dives and Pauper*, Precept I., Ch. V. The point is still more fully discussed in Bishop Pecock's *Repressor* (Rolls Series), from which we shall have occasion to quote further on.

The ceremony thus alluded to is not preserved in the Roman ritual, but we have retained a vestige of the solemn entry into the city or cathedral in the halt still made by the sacred ministers in front of the closed church door. As the procession came back to the town, that is, in their symbolistic conception of the scene, as our Saviour drew nigh to the walls of Jerusalem, high up among the battlements over the city gate, or over the cathedral porch, a group of choristers would be looking out ready to greet His approach.[1] The procession comes to a standstill, and there above their heads the fresh young voices of the choir-boys ring out through the still morning air, chanting the words:

Gloria, laus et honor tibi sit, Rex, Christe Redemptor,
Cui puerile decus prompsit Hosanna pium.

Glory, and laud, and honour
To Thee, Redeemer King!
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet Hosannas ring![2]

[1] In the mediæval English uses this idea that the cantors of the *Gloria laus* must be somehow raised aloft was nearly always carried out. At Winchester, Chichester, and other places, a gallery over the west porch was used for the purpose. The York rubric seems to suggest that a temporary structure should be erected, as we know undoubtedly to have been the case in some instances. At Lincoln the cantors would seem to have stood on the top of the arch which spanned the Bail.

[2] Dr. J. M. Neale's translation. This version seems to me to convey better the spirit of the original, than the rendering without rhyme by the same author, which copies the metre more closely:

Glory and honour and laud be to Thee, King Christ the Redeemer,
Children before whose steps, raised their Hosannas of praise.

Even though a thousand years have passed since its first singing, the quaint cadences of the old chant, probably but little changed in all that long interval, still sound wonderfully beautiful as we hear them in our churches now.

The crowd outside the gate take up the strain, and kneeling down re-echo the words to the same notes. Then the voices of the children are heard again:

Israel es tu Rex, Davidis et inclyta proles,
Nomine qui in Domini, Rex benedicte, venis.

Thou art the King of Israel;
Thou David's royal son;
Who in the Lord's name comest,
The King and Blessed One.

The chorus repeat as before, 'Glory and laud and honour,' etc., and then once more the choristers:

The company of angels
Are praising Thee on high;
And mortal men and all things
Created, make reply.
Glory and laud, etc.

The people of the Hebrews
With palms before Thee went;
Our praise, and prayer, and anthems
Before Thee we present.
Glory and laud, etc.

In hastening to Thy Passion
They raised their hymns of praise;
In reigning midst Thy glory
Our melody we raise.
Glory and laud, etc.

Thou didst accept their praises;
Accept the prayers we bring,
Who in all good delightest,
Thou good and gracious King!
Glory and laud, etc.

In our modern ceremony, the rubric tells us:

At the return of the procession two or four cantors go into the church, and shutting the door, with their faces towards the procession, sing the first two verses of the hymn *Gloria laus*, etc., which are repeated by the priest and others outside the church. . . . Then the subdeacon knocks at the door with the foot of the cross, which, being opened, the procession enters the church singing *Ingrediente Domino*, etc.

Even as we see it performed with the limited resources at the command of an ordinary parish priest in England, the rite is a very impressive one, but it is no exaggeration to say that we have retained hardly more than a shadow of the dramatic surroundings which lent colour to the scene in the ritual of the middle ages. The dominant motive, always recognizable among many diversities in the old ceremonial, was to reproduce as

vividly as possible all the details of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem. For this reason, as already said, the palms were not uncommonly blessed at some outlying chapel or station, if possible a place beyond the walls of the town. Long after the celebration of a separate Mass at the station where the palms were blessed had gone out of use, the station itself and the procession were retained.

If we may trust a legend often repeated by early writers on ritual, it was precisely on such an occasion as this that both the words and music of the *Gloria laus* were first composed. Theodulphus, Bishop of Orleans, in the year 828 had been accused of conspiring against the king of France, Louis le Débonnaire, and the king, believing the accusation, had for several years kept him a close prisoner at Angers. Theodulphus was confined in a prison close to the city gate, and we are told that one Palm Sunday morning, when the procession according to custom halted outside the walls, the prisoner from his cell, raised his voice and broke out into the hymn *Gloria laus*, the words and music of which he had just composed. The king, who, as it chanced, was himself taking part in the procession, was so enchanted with the poem that he at once pardoned the offender and restored him to liberty. It is a pretty story, and although I cannot say that I quite believe it in that form, it has lately been discovered that it rests upon almost contemporary authority.

And here, perhaps, a word may be said as to

the previous history of the *Hosanna*. It is, perhaps, sometimes forgotten that the association of this cry with the waving of palm-branches does not date merely from our Lord's solemn entry into Jerusalem. If the people saluted our Saviour in this manner at the moment of His triumph, it was because both action and words were familiar to them as part of the ceremonies of one of the most joyous festivals of the year. On each of the seven days of the feast of Tabernacles the people moved in procession about the altar in the court of the Temple, making their boughs of palm bend towards it, and shouting *Hosanna* ('save now'), while the trumpets sounded. Moreover it would seem that verses 25 and 26 of Psalm cxvii., beginning *Hosanna* and containing the phrase, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord,' were used as a sort of responsory to the great *Hallel* (Psalms cxii.–cxvii.), which were recited on the occasion. When it is added, from the explicit tradition of the Talmud, that the children who were old enough to wave the palm-branches were expected to take part in the celebration, and that the boughs themselves came in course of time to be called *Hosannas*, it will be clear how close a connexion there is between the Christian procession of Palm Sunday and the palm festival still observed by the Jews after the harvest in the autumn. Both the ceremonies of the Jews in their synagogues and our own procession on Palm Sunday represent a rite which has existed

in some shape from the time of the entry into the promised land more than 3,000 years ago.

Mediæval Developments of the Palm Procession

One point in connexion with the Palm Sunday procession which seems still to call for a word of notice is suggested by the variety of local customs to which the procession formerly gave rise. The origin of this great diversity of ritual must undoubtedly be traced to the various efforts made to give reality to the representation of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, first of all by providing some adequate substitute for the person of our Saviour, and secondly by a dramatic presentment of the *meeting* between Him and the multitude who shouted 'Hosanna to the Son of David.' The words of St. John's Gospel are explicit—*processerunt obviam ei*, 'they went out to meet Him,' and there was consequently every motive to strive to portray as picturesquely as possible the emotions of the crowd when first they came into the presence of our Saviour.[1] As regards the

[1] One of the concluding distichs of the *Gloria laus*, not always found even in the mediæval service-books, ran thus :

Sis pius ascensor, tuus et nos simus asellus
Tecum nos capiat urbs veneranda Dei.

Which has been quaintly translated by Dr. Neale :

Be Thou, O Lord, the rider,
And we the little ass,
That to God's Holy City,
Together we may pass.

manner of indicating that Divine presence, one of the earliest detailed descriptions which we possess, that contained in the life of St. Ulrick of Augsburg, speaks of the use of an effigy of our Lord seated upon an ass ; and there can be no doubt that this device continued to be employed in certain parts of Germany, notably in Swabia and Bavaria, down to the time of the Reformation.[1] Kirchmeyer, of course, satirizes the practice—

A wooden Ass they have, and Image great that on him rides,
And underneath the Ass's feet a table broad there slides.

* * * * *

This being sung, the people cast the branches as they pass
Some part upon the Image, and some part upon the Ass,
Before whose feet a wondrous heap of boughs and branches lie ;
This done, into the church he straight is drawn full solemnly.

I do not think that this rather clumsy device, which so easily lent itself to irreverence and

[1] See Birlinger, *Aus Schwaben*, ii. 66. So also at Hamburg (*Hamb. Chron.* 403). Some of these life-size figures of our Lord mounted upon an ass with four little wheels underneath enabling the 'Palmesel' to be dragged along the road are still preserved as artistic curiosities in the 'Georgianum' at Munich. See an article by M. Raich in the *Katholik*, Feb. 1902, p. 175. Other similar figures of an ass used in proces ions (e.g. at Beauvais in France) are rather to be connected with the flight into Egypt.

buffoonery, was anywhere in vogue in England. Another and much more spiritual conception, also of very early date, was the use of the book of the holy Gospels, which was solemnly carried in a sort of shrine called *portatorium* as a symbol of Jesus Christ Himself. In this country, however, the almost universal practice seems to have been to unveil the processional cross or crucifix and to supplement this with a feretory (a portable bier or shrine) containing both relics and the Blessed Sacrament, the last mentioned detail being traceable to the time of Lanfranc. This combination of the Eucharistic Presence with the outward form of our suffering Redeemer was perhaps best calculated to impress all who took part in the ceremony with a sense of the real significance of what was enacted. Although the rubric in the Sarum Missal is somewhat obscure, it would seem that the crucifix and the shrine with the Blessed Sacrament[1] were not carried along with all the clerics and people, forming one procession; but that they were taken separately by a few of the clergy, who followed a different route and contrived to meet the main procession face to face at the first halting-station, just as the words were being chanted, *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini* (Blessed is he who cometh in the name of

[1] Simon, Abbot of St. Albans in the twelfth century, presented the monastery with *unum vas mirificum*, which seems to have been a kind of monstrance, expressly for carrying the Blessed Sacrament on this occasion. Matthew Paris describes it in detail.

the Lord). A very interesting description of the ceremony is preserved to us in Bishop Pecock's anti-Lollard treatise the *Repressor*.[1] He lets us see something of the diversity of usage which still prevailed at the time of his writing, the beginning of the fifteenth century.

In days of old (he says), when procession was made on Palm Sunday before Mass, the Eucharist was not brought forth in order that the procession of the clerks and of the lay people should meet with Him ;[2] but a bare uncovered cross was brought forth against the procession, that the procession should meet against it, as I have read in divers old Ordinals of cathedral churches and of monasteries in England ; though in later days and particularly (*namelich*) in some churches, the Eucharist is borne forth and the procession meeteth with the Eucharist borne in a chest among relics, and in many places He is borne in a cup ordained thereto. Then thus (Bishop Pecock goes on) I put the difficulty. In those days and in those places when and where the procession met on Palm Sunday with the naked cross or with the chest of relics without the Eucharist, some of the clerks were ordained for to stand before the said cross and for to turn them towards the procession and say in singing to all the clergy and people thus :

[1] *The Repressor of over much Blaming of the Clergy* (Rolls Series), pp. 203, seq.

[2] The custom of carrying the Blessed Sacrament in the procession is as old as the days of Lanfranc, as mentioned above. Probably enough, the practice only established itself by slow degrees in the North ; though at St. Albans it was known in the twelfth century.

'O Sion, mystic daughter, lo, thy king, mild and meek, sitting upon beasts, cometh to thee; whom the lesson of prophets hath before spoken (*prædixit*): "This is He which cometh from Edom, in clothes dyed with blood, full comely in his garment, passing forth (*gradiens*) in virtues, and not in horses of battle, neither in high towers." This is he which as an innocent lamb is betrayed to the death, which is death to death, and a bit to hell, giving power to live by His death, as blessed prophets sometime sang in prophecy.'[1]

And then this thus said and sung from the clerks in the cross's behalf to the priests and lay people in the procession, the priests and people fell down kneeling with all the knees to the ground, saying or singing, or in both manners, to the said discovered (uncovered) cross thus—

'"Hail thou whom the people of Hebrews meeting witnesseth to be Jesus, and crien to Thee words of health.

'"Hail, Light of the World, King of kings, Glory of Heaven, to whom abideth or longeth empire, praising and worship here and for ever.

'"Hail, our health, very peace, redemption and virtue, which with Thy free will, hast gone under for us the lawis of death."'[2]

[1] Bishop Pecock has here united in one three different appeals made 'in the cross's behalf,' that is, addressed to the great procession of priests and people, by the cantors standing beside the cross which represented our Saviour. The crowd responded by three separate prostrations, during which they sang each time a different portion of the rude verses which Pecock groups together and translates in rhythmical prose.

[2] It is clear that Pecock has here attempted some sort of rhythmical translation of the Latin hexameters; as again when he translates

And open it is that to Christ Himself (if He had been there present) they might not have made more lowly acknowledgment that He was their God, than they at thilk times and places made to the bare cross or to the chest of relics in which the Eucharist was not. Wherefore through all the days and places in which the Eucharist was not borne against the procession in Palm Sunday, all the people of the procession bare themselves and governed themselves anent the cross, even as they would have borne and governed themselves anent Christ Himself, if He had been visibly present.

After a reference to the *Gloria laus*, 'sungen toward the crosse' by children 'whiche weren sett on highe,' Bishop Pecock touches upon another feature in the ritual of the same day.

Also in another place of the same procession it was and is yet kept and used in many churches, that the principal crucifix of the church shall be discovered and showed bare and naked to all the people of the procession. [He only means, of course, that the cloth which veiled it during the lenten season was removed.] And in the while the crucifix is in discovering the principal priest with the choir shall fall down to ground at the least upon all the knees and shall sing thus: 'Hail our King, the son of David,' etc. Also, while the whole choir of priests and clerks

Gloria laus a little further on: 'Glorie, preising and honour be to Thee, King Christ, Agenbier.' Agenbier (=Again buyer) is a literal rendering of Red-emptor.

sing thus, all the lay people in the procession kneel down and knock their breasts, and some fallen so down that their breasts and mouths touch the ground. And more compunction, more devotion, and lower submission they might not, nor could array, for to bisette (fix) upon Christ Himself if He were in stead of the cross so discovered.

The same ritual seems to have been observed in almost every parish church, if we may judge from the description, which a Catholic of Elizabeth's days has left of the Palm Sunday ceremonies, as they occurred in his youth in Long Melford Parish Church, Suffolk:

Upon Palm Sunday, the Blessed Sacrament was carried in procession about the churchyard, under a fair canopy, borne by four yeomen. The procession coming to the church gate went westward, and they with the Blessed Sacrament went eastward; and when the procession came against the door of Mr. Clopton's aisle, they, with the Blessed Sacrament and with a little bell and singing, approached at the east end of our Lady's Chapel; at which time a boy, with a thing in his hand pointed to it, signifying a prophet as I think, sang, standing upon the turret that is on the said Mr. Clopton's aisle door: *Ecce Rex tuus venit*, etc. And then all did kneel down, and then rising up, went singing together into the church, and coming near the porch, a boy or one of the clerks did cast over among the boys flowers and singing cakes.[1]

[1] Neale, *Views of most Interesting Churches*, vol. ii. No. 12, Melford, p. 13.

This 'procession about the churchyard,' which was almost universal in mediæval England, was also practised in France, and has been retained in some places down to our own day. A modern author writes :[1]

There is something particularly pathetic in the idea of associating the dead in the gladness of this feast. These faithful departed, we may hope, have already grasped the palm of victory ; they have made their triumphant entry into the Heavenly Jerusalem ; but if they still linger in the place of expiation ; why then ! we must pray for them. While the clergy are singing their hymns and antiphons before the great churchyard Cross all the crowd of lay folk, disperse and kneel down beside the graves of their own relations. The celebrant traverses the paths of the burial ground, sprinkling holy water, and in a short time all the assistants meet again before the great crucifix. Then, according to our custom in Le Berry, while the passage is sung, *O crux, ave, spes unica*, etc., there is placed over the arm of the cross a great garland of blessed box.

In spite of the solemnity of the moment the crowd in certain parishes have their attention curiously preoccupied. They are keen to notice where the wind comes from, for, according to old tradition, the wind will remain for forty days in the quarter from which it blows now, and, in fact, the predominant wind for the whole twelvemonth to come will be

[1] A. de Barral, *Autour du Clocher*.

that which is blowing at the moment of the hanging up of the garland.

The garland remains where it is placed until the next Ash Wednesday, and then it is burnt, and it is with these ashes of the churchyard wreath that the solemn words are spoken—

> 'Remember, man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return.'

There were many other ceremonies practised besides these, but it would be tedious to speak of them in detail. I will only notice the curious usage, common in England, that the shrine containing the Blessed Sacrament used to be lifted up on high in front of the church door, in such a way that the whole procession on entering the church again should pass underneath it. Also, there was a still more quaint practice, of which we hear a great deal in Germany, which consisted in the celebrant, whether bishop or parish priest, prostrating himself on the ground before the cross or shrine representing Christ our Lord. While he lay there the deacon struck him with a palm branch, chanting the words—

Percutiam, scriptum est enim : percutiam pastorem et dispergentur oves gregis.[1]

Whereupon the celebrant rose to his feet and cried—

[1] I will smite, for it is written : I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.

Postquam autem resurrexero præcedam vos in Galilæam.[1]

And the choir took it up with the words—

Ibi me videbitis.[2]

The reformers, in satirizing this ceremony, were fond of telling how a rough lout witnessing the beating shouted out: '*Mit einem Flegel, das Rohr ist viel zu leicht!*' (With a flail, the reed is much too light).

Still another custom which prevailed in some places where the Blessed Sacrament was used to represent our Saviour, was to take It, as it were by stealth, from the mother church to the 'station' at dead of night, in order that the faithful might find our Lord awaiting them, when they came to conduct Him solemnly next morning from Bethany to Jerusalem. Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament made it a special devotion to attend this secret progress in the night-time, and we find the practice noted among their constitutions, sometimes even turned into rhyme, as in the case of a Confraternity at Rouen about the year 1527.

> Soyez certains, Seigneurs et Dames,
> Que tous les ans le jour de Rames,
> A minuit, comme est de coutume,

[1] But when I shall have risen again I will go before you into Galilee.

[2] There ye shall see me. Hoeynck, *Geschichte der kirchlichen Liturgie des Bisthums Augsburg*, p. 209.

Il faut que chacq'un s'accoutume
D'aller vite comme le dard
De Notre Dame à Saint Godard,
Tres humblement d'un cœur non feint
Aider à porter le Corps Saint.[1]

This last description belongs to the church of Rouen, and it is interesting to note that an exactly similar usage prevailed at Hereford. Mr. Edmund Bishop, in a most valuable paper,[2] has shown the close connexion which existed between these two churches in the matter of the Palm Sunday ceremonial. On the other hand his researches seem to indicate that the Sarum ritual did not borrow so much from Rouen as has hitherto been generally supposed. At Hereford, as at Rouen, the place of the station was outside the city walls, and on returning *Gloria laus* was in each case sung by a group of choir-boys from the top of the city gate.[3]

Substitutes for the Palm Branches

The now prevalent custom of procuring, even in these northern lands, leaves and branches of

1 Quoted by Thiers, *Exposition*, vol. ii. p. 169. Notre Dame was, of course, the Cathedral, St. Godard the place of the station.

2 The paper is entitled the 'Holy Week Rites of Sarum, Hereford and Rouen compared.' (*Transactions of the Society of St. Osmund*, vol. i.)

3 The rubric in the case of Hereford runs: 'Quæ (processio) cum venerit ad portas civitatis laudantur portæ, in quarum summitate appareant septem vel quinque pueri cantantes *Gloria laus*' (*Hereford Missal* [Henderson], p. 80.)

real palm is, of course, mainly due to modern commercial enterprise and facilities of communication.[1] Formerly almost any kind of green bough seems to have been used for the purpose,[2] but special favour was shown to the willow and the yew. It is a significant testimony, not only to the prevalence of willow as a substitute, but also to the antiquity of the ceremony, that in Germany, as well as in every part of England and Scotland, the catkin of the willow is popularly known by the name of *palm*, *weiden-palme*—'willow palm.' 'But for encheson,' says an ancient author, 'for the reason that we have non olyfe that bereth grene leves, we taken in stede of it hew (yew) and palmes wyth (withy, or willow), and bereth about in procession, and so this day we callen palm-sonnenday.'[3]

It would be easy to multiply such allusions, both of a later and earlier date, but I may content myself with remarking that, in the extended version of the ninth century hymn *Gloria laus*, spoken of above, there is a clear reference to the use of willow-branches in the procession—

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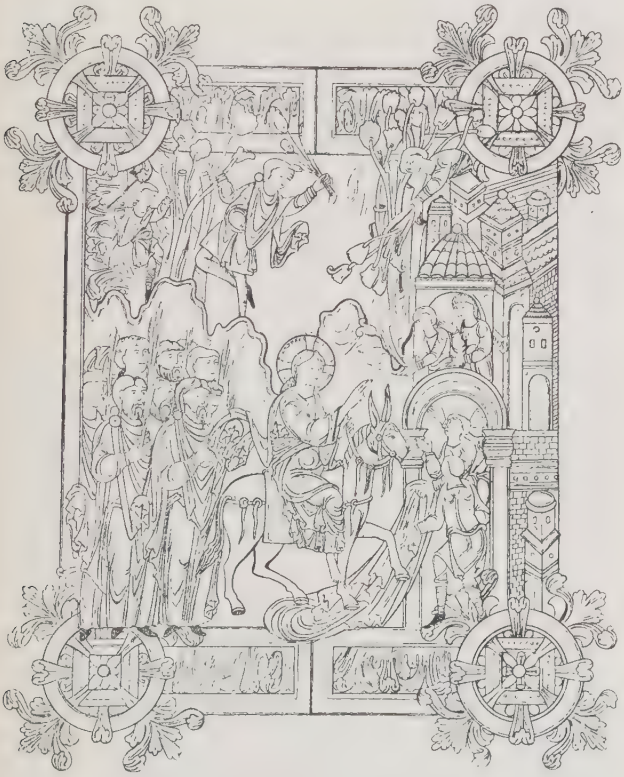
[1] A drawing in the Æthelwold Benedictional representing our Lord's entry into Jerusalem shows unmistakable palms. See o n o te. It is possible that the rich monastery at Winchester already in the tenth century imported them for liturgical use.

[2] The authoritative *Cær monıale Episcoporum* s n gests that f true palms cannot be had, boughs of olive should be used with little flowers or crosses of palm attached to them.

[3] See an article in the *Katholik*, Feb. 1902, *Religiöse Volksgebräuche im Bisthum Augsburg*, p. 171.

Castaque pro ramis salicis præcordia sunto,
Nos operum ducat prata ad amœna viror.

Hardly less universal is the misuse of the name



CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.
ILLUMINATION IN ÆTHELWOLD'S BENEDICTIONAL,
TENTH CENTURY.

Note the palms, and the figures over the gate corresponding to the children who sing *Gloria laus.*

palm, more especially perhaps in Ireland, to denote the boughs of the yew, and there can be no doubt that this also finds its explanation in the ancient practice of employing sprays of this evergreen for the ceremonies on Palm Sunday. Apart from the funereal aspect of the yew, which seems to make it an excellent substitute for the cypress of more southern climes, there was an obvious advantage in having close at hand the trees which supplied the boughs used in Church services. It has been more than once suggested, therefore, that we ought to look in this direction for at least a partial explanation of the practice of planting yews in churchyards. There is evidence that long after Reformation times these trees were commonly spoken of as 'palms,' and it is only a few years ago that an anxious inquirer, agitated apparently by the botanical problems involved, wrote to seek an explanation of the fact that the churchwardens of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury, caused a 'palm-tree' to be planted in the churchyard in 1709. The question was promptly met with a parallel quotation from the churchwarden's account of Woodbury, Devonshire, in which it is recorded that in 1775 'a yew or palm-tree was planted in the churchyard ye south side of the church, in the same place where one was blown down by the wind a few years ago.'

One of the earliest benedictions for the palms, that found in Archbishop Egbert's Pontifical, also speaks of 'these branches of palms and divers

green shrubs and flowers.' This may possibly only refer to the catkins of the willow, but it also seems to admit a more literal interpretation, if indeed we may lay stress on the terms in which Lanfranc refers to Palm Sunday in his Constitutions. 'Afterwards,' he says, 'let the abbot or some priest draw near and bless the palms, and *flowers*, and sprays'; and among the customs of his old monastery of Bec it is provided that 'a carpet is to be spread before the altar and upon it are laid the *flowers*, and sprays, and palms (*flores et frondes et palmæ*), to be blessed by the celebrant.' With this seems to agree one of the antiphons, still recognizable in the *Missale Romanum*, amongst those appointed to be sung during the procession: *Occurrunt turbæ cum floribus et palmis*, etc.—'The crowds come to meet Him with flowers and palms; in like manner we also ought to come to meet Him with the flowers of virtues and the palms of victories.' Moreover there can be no reasonable doubt that in the Middle Ages the Latin phrase, *Pascha floridum* or *Pascha florum*,[1] was used to designate Palm Sunday.

[1] Florida, discovered on March 20, 1513, seems to owe its name to its having been sighted on the *pascua florida*, which then meant Palm Sunday. This suggests a general use of flowers in connexion with the day. The designation was by no means exclusively Spanish. Cf. the French *pâques fleuries*, and still more the German *Plumostertag*, *Bluomoster*, etc., in Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters*, i. 157. I have dealt with the question of palms and *pascua florida* somewhat more fully in an article in *The Month*, March, 1896.

The Chanting of the Passion

It is unnecessary to dwell here upon those elements of the Palm Sunday ritual which are common to all High Masses, and we may therefore pass on to the only other distinctive feature of the service—the chanting of the Passion. Let me say in the first place that the practice of reading the whole Passion at this season is very old. We know it from a little story St. Augustine tells. He informs us that in the early years of his episcopate he thought that it would be better to have the Passion read in one narrative made up of all four Evangelists,—as a matter of fact this diatessaron arrangement *was* followed in Spain,—but the people of Hippo would not have it. They were accustomed to hear the Passion according to St. Matthew, and when they heard something new they raised quite a tumult, and St. Augustine thought that for peace sake it was better that they should have their way.[1]

We may also say that the arrangement of dividing the narrative between three deacons likewise dates from a remote period. In the liturgical books written considerably before the Norman Conquest we find the parts divided as we divide them now. One deacon, whose allotted portions are marked with an E, sang the part of the Evangelist or narrator; another, indicated by

[1] S. Augustini *Sermones*, No. 232, c. 1; Morin, *Liber Comicus*, p. 151.

X or a cross, sang all the speeches of Christ our Lord; a third, marked S, for *synagoga*, took the utterances of the other speakers and the mob.

With regard to the actual chant now heard in our churches, we cannot pronounce with any confidence *when* that began. Like so many more of the masterpieces of Gregorian music it is lost in the mist of ages. All we know is that Pope Sixtus V bade the musician Guidetti take the greatest pains to ascertain the best and most ancient traditions, and that that which is now in common use follows closely the official version which Guidetti published in consequence in 1586. In the Papal chapels the responses of the crowd are always harmonized according to a setting of the composer Vittoria, and there is a special decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites permitting these shouts of the mob to be sung in harmony. The responses of Vittoria have been said by an eminent modern musician to form one of the greatest triumphs of polyphonic art.

It may be worth while to add that it is out of this practice of singing the Passion with some attempt at a dramatic presentment that the Passion music, of which so much has been written by German composers, notably Handel and John Sebastian Bach, has developed by slow and somewhat intricate stages. Just as our modern oratorio has its origin in the musical entertainments, *dramma sacra per musica*, of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, so the Passion music took its

departure from the chanting of the Passion which was universal in our old Catholic churches before Protestantism was dreamed of.

A good deal might be added about the various special observances which in one church or another have contributed to make the reading of the Passion more impressive.[1] Perhaps the Ambrosian rite is in this respect more remarkable than any other.

In the Ambrosian rite, as it is still observed in the cathedral of Milan, the Passion is sung by one deacon alone, but the acolytes in this case have their candles lighted. When the deacon comes to the words *emisit spiritum*, the Archbishop leaves his throne to kneel in the centre of the sanctuary, the clergy all throw themselves upon their knees, the great bells are solemnly tolled, the acolytes extinguish their candles and all the other lamps are put out, two subdeacons advance to the altar and strip it of all its ornaments, a dark curtain with three crosses upon it is let down behind, and the Archbishop's throne and all other objects in the church are divested of carpets and hangings.[2]

Let me not quit this subject without reminding the reader of the rubric which prescribes that the

[1] The rending of the veil at Seville when the words of the Passion are read on the Wednesday, 'et velum templi scissum est,' is said to produce a most dramatic effect. 'A roar of cannon shakes the Cathedral to its foundations, and the white veil, which hangs from roof to floor at the back of the altar, is torn down the centre "from the top even to the bottom."'

[2] *Officiatura della Settimana Santa*, 1831, p. 213.

palms should be held in the hand during the reading of the Gospel. In the Palm Sunday hymn in *Lyra Liturgica* may be found an appropriate allusion to this practice :

Stand at your posts, ye faithful bands,
And mark the Gospel words ;
And as they sound, with trusty hands
Upraise your leafy swords.

Mid error's strife and war's alarms,
Prepare to do your part ;
Ye bear in hand the martyr's arms,
Then nurse the martyr's heart.

Victory and Pardon

Two minor points connected with this day call for a word of notice before we finally pass to another topic. The first has reference to the palms used in the Papal ceremonial. It would seem to have been the practice as early as the ninth century for the Pope to send such palms at Easter-time to the Emperor as a compliment and in courteous presage of the triumph of his arms. We have record of a presentation of this sort in the pontificate of Pope St. Leo IV, who in 853 despatched branches to ' Louis and Lothair,' the Emperors, 'as a symbol of victory, according to the custom of the Easter festival.'[1] Again, Pope

[1] Jaffe-Löwenfeld, *Regesta*, No. 2626

John VIII, in 875, sends palms according to primitive custom to the Emperor Louis 'as he draws nigh to the paschal solemnity, after the ordeal of Lent.'[1] Such a custom seems to presuppose the use of selected palm-branches grown specially for this purpose, and many hundred years later we find the right of supplying palms for the Papal chapels regarded as a lucrative monopoly. Indeed, on a famous occasion when the present obelisk was being erected in the piazza of St. Peter's, the skipper of a little coasting vessel from the Riviera, who saved the engineering enterprise from failure, claimed that monopoly as his reward. A happy suggestion of throwing water on the ropes had enormously increased, at a critical moment, the power of the engineers' cranes, and for three hundred years the descendants of the worthy *padrone* who cried '*acqua alle funi*,' have enjoyed the privilege for which he petitioned, of furnishing the palm-branches required for this day.[2]

As for the palms sent in the ninth century to the Emperors of the West, we do not indeed know for certain that they were those which had been blessed and used in the procession. But seeing that the gift was by custom associated with this

[1] Ib., No. 3007. 'Ludovico imperatori per hunc quadragesimalem cursum paschlai jam solemnitati proximanti secundum morem pristinum palmarum ramos, mittit."

[2] See *The Month*, March 1896.

season,[1] such an origin seems highly probable. Moreover, if the palm so presented was that blessed or carried by the Pope himself, this custom would throw much light upon the later usage of sending to some prince or person of distinction the Golden Rose which the Pope had borne during the stational procession on *Lætare* Sunday.

It should also be noticed that from the time of St. Jerome onwards Palm Sunday was called in Rome and many other places *Dominica de Indulgentia* (Remission Sunday). This probably had reference to some relaxation in, or absolution from, the canonical penances enjoined during Lent; and though the formal reconciliation of public penitents took place on Maundy Thursday, it may have been necessary to extend the time for investigating and absolving, beginning with Palm Sunday itself.[2] However this may be, tradition in Rome and in some other localities has connected the granting of pardon with this particular day. Even now the Cardinal Grand Penitentiary, on the afternoon of Palm Sunday, repairs to the Lateran Basilica, and there, equipped with his rod of office, hears the confessions of those who resort to him, while at the

[1] It does not, however, seem to have been entirely confined to Easter. See Jaffe-Löwenfeld, *Regesta*, Nos. 2915, 3079, 3427.

[2] Tommasi, who discusses this question (*Opera*, vol. v. p. 454) thinks that this Sunday was called *Dominica de Indulgentia*, because it was the first day in the week of remission. The bodily purification seems in many places to have begun on this day; whence the name *capitilavium*.

same time he touches with his rod (called *bacchetta* or *verga*) the heads of the faithful who kneel before him to ask this favour. I am strongly tempted to believe that this last practice is a survival of the so-called 'private reconciliation' intended for those who, as they took ashes upon their heads in imitation of the public penitents, and had certain observances of mortification enjoined them by their confessor at the beginning of Lent, so were also bidden to come back for reconciliation at its close.[1] Whether the touching with the wand represents the ancient imposition of hands, or rather that striking with a rod, which was the invariable adjunct of absolution in the external forum,[2] I should hesitate to decide. It was, perhaps, adopted as a compendious combination of both ceremonies. In any case it is certain that this use of a rod of office by penitentiaries was not confined to Rome. Picart gives an engraving of the touching with the rod, as it was practised in French cathedrals in the seventeenth century; and Dr. Rock, in his *Church of Our Fathers*, reproduces a similar scene from a Flemish manuscript two hundred years older.

This, however, was not the only way in which Palm Sunday at Rome justified its ancient name of the 'Sunday of Remission.' A seventeenth

[1] See above, Chapter ii. p. 71.

[2] See the engraving from the Giunta Pontifical reproduced on p. 109.

century traveller makes casual allusion to another usage, which it will be sufficient to give without comment in the author's words :

On Palm Sunday at Vespers I saw in one of the churches a boy seated on a chair beside the altar, clothed in a large robe of new blue taffeta, with a crown of olive round his head, and holding in his hand a lighted white wax taper. It was a lad of about fifteen, who had that day by the Pope's order been liberated from prison, to which he had been committed for killing another boy of his own age.[1]

[1] Fynes Moryson, *Itinerary*, p. 294.

CHAPTER VI

Tenebrae

The service of Tenebrae, which is sung in the evening of the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Holy Week, possesses a unique interest of its own. Apart from the solemn daily chanting of the Divine Office now happily inaugurated in the Westminster Cathedral, it is almost the only occasion upon which the laity in this country are brought into contact with the nocturnal portion of that public prayer of the Church, through which from the earliest times she has offered to God, by night as well as by day, an uninterrupted sacrifice of praise. There is much reason to wish that the contents of the Roman Breviary were better known to Catholics than they are.[1] Cardinal Newman, while yet an Anglican, devoted one issue of the *Tracts for the Times* (No. 75) to this subject, introducing it with the remark that 'there is so

[1] It is much to be regretted that the excellent translation of the Roman Breviary made by the late Marquis of Bute, of which I have often availed myself in this chapter, has not yet been republished at a price which would place it within the reach of a larger number of the faithful.

much of excellence and beauty in the services of the Breviary, that were it skilfully set before the Protestant by Roman controversialists as the book of devotions received in their communion it would undoubtedly raise a prejudice in their favour.' Now in such of our parishes as carry out the service of Tenebrae the faithful have the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with a most beautiful portion of the night offices of the Church. Of course the character of the service on these three days is in many ways exceptional. The tone of joy and gladness, which at every other season is dominant, is now almost entirely suppressed, and to form an idea of the Divine Office through the Tenebrae service alone would be like judging of the liturgy of High Mass after assisting once or twice at a Requiem. None the less, the framework, despite the exclusion of hymns and some subsidiary responses and blessings, is substantially the same as that found in the nocturnal prayer of the Church throughout the year. In order to explain the general arrangement I must enter into some rather uninteresting details, but it is a matter, I fear, in which it would be unreasonable to presume that the average layman possesses any previous knowledge.

The Matins and Lauds of the Breviary

Passing over the name Tenebrae, on which a word may be said later, it is natural to ask first what Tenebrae exactly is. Well, the Tenebrae

service is simply the recitation in choir of a portion of the Divine Office of the Church, the 'Matins and Lauds,' as this portion is called, for those three solemn days, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Every one has seen a priest occupied in saying his 'Office,' and most people understand, at least vaguely, that this Office consists of psalms and lessons from Holy Scripture, and that priests are bound to say a certain variable selection of these from their Breviaries daily.

Now that a priest should recite this privately is in one sense a concession, in another the extension of an obligation. Those psalms and prayers which a priest reads from his Breviary were originally intended to be recited in public in choir. In cathedrals and among the monastic Orders they are still, and always have been, chanted in common. When the Reformers broke away from the Church, just as they translated and disfigured the Mass in their Communion service, so they curtailed and adapted the Divine Office for their own Morning and Evening Prayer.[1] The Morning

1 There can be no doubt that the laity in the Middle Ages, ill-educated as they may have been, took an extraordinary interest in the Divine Office. It would seem that Matins were commonly recited in every parish church, however small, and that the laity both could and did attend. The due execution of the Tenebrae offices was in particular regarded as a matter of much importance; and in the agreements which were often drawn up to regulate the services to be rendered by a priest or community in some chapel or chantry or public oratory, a special stipulation is frequently made that Tenebrae shall be duly recited. In parish churches the congregation were bound to furnish a Tenebrae hearse.—Wilkins, *Concilia*, ii. p. 139.

Prayer represents that portion of the office which we call Matins, Lauds and Prime. The Evening Prayer or Evensong corresponds to Vespers and Compline. Some of my readers perhaps may have been present in Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's while the service has been going on, and may have noticed how after the choir have sung a few psalms in alternating verses, the minister goes to the reading-desk or pulpit and reads a portion of the Old or New Testament, concluding with the words 'Here endeth the First Lesson,' or 'Here endeth the Second Lesson.' Well, all that is only an imitation of the office which was sung in our cathedrals before the change of religion. Those superb choirs in the old cathedrals were built in order that the Canons or the monks might sit facing each other in the stalls chanting the verses of the psalms alternately, and in the centre stood a lectern where after the psalms were over the lessons were read or where cantors intoned the antiphons and responses.

Again, in this daily recitation of the office, the Church for more than a thousand years has recognized seven different *hours* or times of prayer—Matins and Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline. In monasteries these are all chanted separately. Matins and Lauds are by far the longest, as long in fact as all the rest put together, and it has been the custom since very early times to consider them as belonging in strictness to the night watch, the 'vigil' in its

earliest and most accurate acceptation. In the old monastic Orders the signal for rising was given between 1.30 and 2.30 a.m. according to the season of the year. The monks rose from their hard beds at once, and filed into the choir to begin *Matins*, which sometimes lasted for nearly two hours The community did not always return to their dormitory, but after a short interval *Lauds* were said with other prayers, and after that *Prime*, which began punctually at sunrise. Now the Church does not ask all her children who say office in private or in common to do as much as that. Some still say their Matins early in the morning; others anticipate and say them the evening before. Either course is permissible. So when we read in our Holy Week books at the beginning of the Tenebrae service for Wednesday afternoon or evening, 'The Office of Holy Thursday at Matins,' we shall perceive at once that the office for the next day is being *anticipated*. We see therefore that the Tenebrae sung on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday is nothing but the Matins and Lauds belonging properly to the middle of the night or the next morning and recited before the hour when they are strictly due.

It would take too long to explain in any considerable detail what Matins and Lauds consist of. There is usually a mixture of four principal elements. The psalms and the lessons form the bulk of the service, but with them also are introduced a few hymns and a few prayers. In

Tenebrae no hymns are said, the reason being, I think, that the office has come down to us practically unchanged from a period earlier than the general introduction of hymns into the Roman rite.[1] We not unfrequently see this principle at work in liturgical matters. On some particularly solemn days the ancient way of doing things becomes stereotyped, and any departure from the old tradition is resented there, although on ordinary days changes are introduced pretty freely. Similarly it is possible that the absence from Tenebrae of certain introductory formulae and benedictions, e.g., the *Deus in adjutorium*, etc., with which we are familiar at the beginning of Vespers, may possibly be due in part to the fact that these formulae are of more recent date than the Tenebrae service. This, however, is very doubtful, and we can only say that our earliest liturgical documents lay great stress upon the omissions spoken of and that it seems reasonable to infer that the custom in the eighth century was already regarded as ancient.[2] On the other hand, these same books are equally precise in enjoining the omission of the *Gloria Patri* both at the end of the psalms and in other places; and in this case there can be little doubt that the omission was made designedly to mark the deep mourning in which the Church

[1] Cf. Bäumer, *Geschichte des Breviers*, p. 256.

[2] Cf. the Roman *Ordines*, published and referred to by Duchesne in his *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, e.g., p. 451; and cf. also Amalarius,

is plunged.[1] It may be noticed that the same exclusion of hymns, blessings and *Glorias* occurs also in the Office for the Dead.

In other respects the Tenebrae Matins follow closely the form and arrangement of the Matins for great feasts. On all festivals, Easter and Whitsuntide only excepted, the office of Matins is divided in the Breviary into three 'nocturns' (from *nox*, night), which we might perhaps consider as three watches or spells of nocturnal prayer. Each nocturn consists of three psalms and three lessons or readings. On days which are not feasts—*feriæ* they are called—there is usually only one nocturn or night watch, but it contains twelve psalms and three lessons. The lessons, when there are three sets, invariably consist in the first nocturn of portions of Holy Scripture, in the second nocturn of short readings about the feast or about the life of the Saint honoured on that day, and in the third nocturn of extracts from a commentary on the Gospel of the day taken from one of the Fathers.

A glance at the Holy Week book will at once show that in the Tenebrae office this rule is on the whole adhered to. What is more, we know that the lessons which we now hear chanted from the ectern at this season are substantially the same

[1] One of the Canons of the Fourth Council of Toledo (A.D. 633) clearly shows that the inappropriateness of the *Gloria Patri* amid the accents of mourning was already an admitted principle. Cf. Bäumer, *Geschichte des Breviers*, p. 192.

as those which were read at Rome in the midnight office before the Pope and his clergy as far back as the eighth century. Our earliest Roman *Ordines* are most precise upon this point. Take for instance the account which they give of the office for Good Friday :

Then the reader gets up to read, and he asks for no blessing, and he does not say *Tu autem Domine*, but the president stops him when he has read enough. Three lessons are taken from the Lamentations of Jeremias, three from the treatise of St. Augustine on the sixty-third Psalm, and three from the Apostle, where he says to the Hebrews, *Festinemus ergo ingredi in illam requiem.*[1]

These directions are taken from a document of the eighth century, but any one who may take the trouble to look at his Holy Week book will see that the lessons named are those which are read in our churches now.

On the Lamentations a few words may be said separately further on. The readings of the second nocturn, taken from St. Augustine on the Psalms, will be found each day to have a special bearing upon the event commemorated. Thus on Maundy Thursday, when the mind of the Church is embittered with the thought of Judas and his treachery, the fifty-fourth psalm is taken, where David complains sorely of his enemies, and more

[1] Duchesne, *Origines*, p. 451.

grievously still because a confidential friend, one of his own household, had leagued with his enemies to persecute him. For Good Friday there are read St. Augustine's comments on the words *Protexisti me Deus a conventu malignantium*, in which much is said upon the following of the Jews who 'whetted their tongues' against Jesus and clamoured for His death. In the portion allotted for the Saturday office St. Augustine discourses upon the sepulchre in which our Lord was laid and upon the 'sleeping witnesses' who guarded it. In the third nocturn the lessons are not as now taken from some homily expounding the Gospel of the day, but they very probably belong to an older system which was prior to the thorough revision of the office by St. Gregory the Great, and was respected by him on these special days on account of the venerable traditions attaching to them. The three lessons, therefore, in the last nocturn of Tenebrae are borrowed each night from the New Testament, from the Epistles of St. Paul, and have an equally obvious reference, as a glance will show, to the dominating thought of the service.

Of the psalms and their antiphons, the chanting of which in point of time occupies the major part of the service, little need be said. Although the nocturnal office is not familiar to the laity, the same remark cannot be made of the hours of Vespers and Compline, and in these the chanting of psalms is not less prominent than in Matins.

To enter thoroughly here into the mind of the Church, the attention should be fixed upon the antiphons which introduce and follow the psalms. These antiphons probably represent what was originally a refrain repeated after each verse of the psalm. Whether this be so or not, we must always turn to them if we wish to realize what is the dominant idea upon which the Church wishes us especially to meditate during the chanting of the psalms. Some devout souls conceive a distaste for the services of the Church in which the recitation of psalms forms a prominent part. They complain that the meaning of the psalms is often so difficult to follow that the chanting seems to them little better than an aimless gabbling of words. This objection would hardly be raised if those who made it understood that the Church does not necessarily ask for attention to each individual sentence. She requires only that our minds should be raised to God and occupied with some pious thought, and in the antiphons introduced at the beginning and end of the office psalms, she supplies us with one such definite thought of her own choosing.

After the three nocturns of Matins follow Lauds. This is not a separate hour. The Church has always applied to herself the words of the psalmist: *Septies in die laudem dixi tibi*, 'I have offered praise to Thee seven times in the day.' It is curious that in that extraordinary Christian inscription of the eighth century found in the

centre of China at Si Ngan Fou, the Syrian missionaries who erected it record the fact that the Christians pray seven times in the day. While therefore Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline are supposed to be separated by an interval, Matins and Lauds are said now on end as one service. In origin they were no doubt distinct. The Lauds formed the service of praise before the dawn, as the psalms of which they are composed still show.[1] It is no doubt the connexion of the Precursor with the dawn, added to the allusion to the *Oriens ex alto*, 'the day-spring from on high,' which has helped to establish the canticle of Zachary, the *Benedictus*, as an invariable element in this portion of the liturgy. Even in Holy Week the Lauds do not wholly lose their jubilant character, though the *Miserere* is introduced in place of more triumphant psalms, and though the antiphons speak in every word of the load of grief with which the Church is crushed.

There seems perhaps to be a certain incongruity in celebrating in the evening two services designed respectively for midnight and for the break of day. However, as we shall see, this is not the only remarkable instance of anticipation which Holy Week affords. The custom of transposing the night offices on these three days to the

[1] E.g. Ps. lxii. *Deus, Deus meus, ad te de luce vigilo*—'O God, my God! to Thee do I watch at break of day.' This is retained in Lauds even in Holy Week and in the Office for the Dead.

evening before was probably due in part to consideration for the convenience of the laity, who at this solemn season might wish to assist at the service and would be wholly unable to attend in the middle of the night. Thus it happens that in some monastic Orders the monks who throughout the

TENEBRAE. (*From Picart's 'Cérémonies.'*)

year maintain an invariable practice of rising for Matins in the still hours of the morning, on these three days alone anticipate the office and are free at this season to enjoy their rest undisturbed.

The Lamentations

Supposing therefore that we now understand at

least vaguely what is the nature of the Tenebrae service at which we are to assist, we may turn to one or two of the features more likely to make an impression than the chanting of the psalms or the reading of the lessons. The psalms of the first nocturns are generally longer than the rest, but when the antiphon belonging to the last of the group of three has been sung, after a brief versicle and response and the recitation of the *Pater noster* in silence, a cantor comes forward to the lectern in the centre of the choir and begins the first chapter of the Lamentations of Jeremias, with the heading *Incipit Lamentatio Jeremiæ Prophetæ* and the acrostic letter *aleph*, singing to a tone which has been universally recognized as one of the most splendid specimens of the ancient plain chant which the music of the Church affords. Nothing could convey more perfectly the spirit of desolation which breathes in the prophet's words. Let me quote on this subject some remarks of a distinguished modern musician, the late W. M. Rockstro. He has previously been speaking of the *Exsultet*, which is sung on Holy Saturday, and contrasting these two masterpieces.

While the one, he says, represents the perfection of triumphant dignity, the other [the Lamentations] carries us down to the very lowest depths of sorrow, and is indeed susceptible of such intensely pathetic expression that none who have ever heard it sung in the only way in which it ever can be sung if it is in-

tended to fulfil its self-evident purpose—that is to say with the deepest feeling the singer can possibly infuse into it—will feel inclined to deny its title to be regarded as the saddest melody within the whole range of music.

In the Sistine Chapel the Papal choir have made it a practice ever since the time of Sixtus V to sing the second and third of the Lamentations in the traditional plain song without harmony, generally by a treble voice, or by two trebles singing in unison with such perfection of intonation and phrasing that visitors almost invariably believe them to be but one. The first Lamentation, however, of each evening is always sung in harmony by the Papal choir according to an arrangement by Palestrina, which is described as being absolutely one of the finest works of that great master, and only inferior to the *Improperia* or Reproaches composed by him for the Good Friday morning service.

It may be interesting to note the impression made upon one of the greatest of modern musicians by this composition as heard in the Sistine Chapel in 1832. It was in these terms that Mendelssohn wrote a few days afterwards :

The solos are chanted entirely by high tenor voices, swelling and subsiding alternately, in the most delicate gradations, sometimes floating almost inaudibly, and blending the various harmonies ; being sung without

any bass voices, and immediately succeeding the previous harsh intonation of the psalms, the effect is truly heavenly.

Mendelssohn goes on to make a very Protestant remark, which deserves a word of comment.

It is rather unfortunate, however, he adds, that those very parts which have to be sung with the deepest emotion and reverence, being evidently those composed with peculiar fervour, should chance to be merely the titles of the chapter or verse, *aleph*, *beth*, *ghimel*, etc., and that the beautiful commencement, which sounds as if it came direct from heaven, should be precisely on these words, *Incipit Lamentatio Jeremiæ Prophetæ*. This must be not a little repulsive to every Protestant heart, and if there be any design to introduce a similar mode of chanting in our churches it appears to me that this will always be a stumbling block; for any one who sings *chapter first*, cannot possibly feel any pious emotions, however beautiful the music may be, let him strive as he will.

This seems to me, I must own, a somewhat narrow-minded criticism. The feeling which animates a musical composition necessarily overflows to all its accessories. The instrumental prelude of a song takes its colour from the words which follow, and it may be that as the result of the contrast with what has gone before or the associations in the mind of a listener the opening

bars of the accompaniment produce an even deeper impression than the song itself. As for the chanting of the letters *aleph*, *beth*, etc., it must be remembered that in the original Hebrew these Lamentations, like some of the psalms, are alphabetical poems, in which the beginning with a particular letter is a part of the rule which governs the verse. The translators could not preserve this peculiarity in their versions; they kept the letters to indicate the nature of the original arrangement; and the Church in her devotion and reverence for Holy Scripture has caused these letters to be sung just as the headings of the chapters are sung. No one makes any objection to the *Sequentia sancti Evangelii*, etc., sung before the Gospel in the Mass. The chanting of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet is an introduction of much the same nature and is like the prelude played upon an instrument before the vocal music begins.

In the third lesson of the last day of Tenebrae the Lamentations give place to the Prayer of Jeremias, which is sung to a chant different from that of the Lamentations, but also of remarkable beauty.

The Responsoria

After each of the nine Lessons, whether Lamentations or readings from the Fathers, there is sung, as always in the Divine Office, a responsory intended

to give expression to the emotions which fill the breasts of those who are listening. The themes of these responsories are often enough taken from the lesson itself, or from some kindred part of Holy Scripture. As the name suggests, there is nearly always something of the dramatic element in their composition. The utterance of one thought elicits from the assembly or from a section of it a response repeating, confirming, embellishing what has been said. Very probably in the beginning of things the whole choir of those assisting at the office may have answered a precentor, and it is likely enough that a considerable development was at first given to these chanted dialogues, a development afterwards curtailed and systematized in accordance with certain definite rules. There is not a little in the *Responsoria* which may remind us of the chorus of a Greek tragedy, and like such choruses it would seem that much pains and interest must have been lavished upon them. Two things may safely be said,—first, that from a very early date indeed they formed a prominent feature of the office at Rome and generally throughout the West; and secondly, that there was no portion of the liturgy in which more admirable genius and instinct were shown than in the arrangement of these compositions. We need not enter into any discussion as to the precise nature of those Roman features which were afterwards modified by Frankish influence. It has been suggested that possibly the arrangement of

the responsories after the third, sixth, and ninth lessons of Tenebrae represents the result of modifications introduced from Gaul,[1] but this is immaterial, and for more than a thousand years past the general type has conformed more or less closely to that of the short responsory, for instance, which is said every day in the course of Compline.

Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Answer. Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Verse. Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.

Answer. I commend my spirit.

Verse. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

Answer. Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Verse. Keep us, O Lord, as the apple of the eye.

Answer. Hide us under the shadow of Thy wings.

It was only natural that the intense religious feeling of Holy Week should have called forth a corresponding degree of inspiration in the framers of these responsories, which are probably older than the time of St. Gregory the Great, though no doubt revised and pruned by him. There can be no two opinions as to the power and pathos with which these little dramatic poems give expression to the emotions which the time calls for. They are the very soul of the Tenebrae services and are

[1] Cf. Bäumer, *Geschichte des Breviers*, p. 256

as admirable in their way as the noble hymns which are to be found in other parts of the liturgy. Take for instance the seventh responsory, in the third nocturn on Maundy Thursday.

Responsory VII. I was like a gentle lamb that is brought to the slaughter, and I knew not that mine enemies had devised devices against me, saying, Come, let us put [poison of a deadly] tree into his bread, and let us cut him off from the land of the living.

Verse. All they that hate me devised my hurt against me: they plotted together to do me evil, saying:

Answer. Come, let us put [poison of a deadly] tree into his bread, and let us cut him off from the land of the living.

It would be hard to bring more graphically before us the innocence of the victim and his patient resignation. Or again, is not the almost exulting tone as of a justly inflicted vengeance in the fourth responsory for the same Maundy Thursday calculated to strike terror into the heart of the most hardened sinner?

Mine own friend hath betrayed Me by the sign of a kiss: 'Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He —hold Him fast.' This was the traitorous sign which he gave, even he who murdered with a kiss. Woe unto that man! He cast down the price of blood, and went, and hanged himself.

Verse. It had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Answer. Woe unto that man! He cast down the price of blood, and went, and hanged himself.

But the pathos of the reproaches put into the mouth of our Saviour, as in the *Improperia* on Good Friday, is perhaps unsurpassed amongst the responsories of this season. It is thus that the Church speaks in the person of Christ after the third Lamentation on Good Friday.

I had planted thee a noble vine. How then art thou turned into a degenerate plant, which willest that Barabbas should be released unto thee, and that I should be crucified?

Verse. I fenced thee, and gathered out the stones from thee, and built a tower in [the midst of] thee.

Answer. How then art thou turned into a degenerate plant, which willest that Barabbas should be released unto thee, and that I should be crucified? I had planted thee a noble vine. How then art thou turned into a degenerate plant, which willest that Barabbas should be released unto thee, and that I should be crucified? [1]

It is not to be wondered at that some of the

1 The translations given above are borrowed from the Marquis of Bute's Roman Breviary. In translating these *Responsoria* he has been guided by the Vulgate wherever sentences are borrowed from Holy Scripture. Cf. Jer. xi. 19, and ii. 21. It is an evidence of the high antiquity of these *Responsoria* that they employ the older Italic version, which preceded St. Jerome's, even in quotations from the prophets.

most able musicians of every age have given themselves to composing suites of *Responsoria* for the Tenebrae office. In the Papal chapels the work of Vittoria is most in favour. In this country the Responsories and anthems of Father de Vico have become very popular, and have been for many years traditional at Farm Street Church and at Stonyhurst. Father de Vico was an Italian Jesuit of considerable eminence as an astronomer. When driven out of Italy by the Revolution, he came for a while to England and left at Stonyhurst the scores of some valuable musical compositions ; amongst them was a Tenebrae service which has since been published.

The Tenebrae Hearse

As far as concerns the externals of the Tenebrae service, there is not much to catch the eye. The most striking feature is the gradual extinction of the candles in the triangular candlestick, which is always a conspicuous object in the sanctuary during these offices. In the Middle Ages this candlestick was known not in England only, but in France and Italy, as the Tenebrae hearse, the word hearse (*hericia*, *herice*) being a corruption from *herpex*, a harrow. It would seem that the idea of a harrow was suggested by the spiky points of the prickets upon which the candles were fixed. It is the same word as that still commonly used in connexion with arrangements for funerals. The

body as it lay in state was wont to be canopied in former times with some sort of an erection in wood or iron provided with prickets for a multitude of tapers. This also suggested the idea of a harrow, and the word was gradually transferred from the construction above the coffin to any receptacle fixed or movable in which the coffin was placed. But to return to the matter before us, the Tenebrae hearses now seen in our churches contain fifteen candles, fourteen of which are commonly made of unbleached wax, while the candle upon the apex of the triangle is white. These candles are extinguished one by one, as each successive psalm of the service is terminated, nine in the Matins and five in the Lauds. During the *Benedictus* the candles on the altar, also usually of a yellow colour, are put out likewise. Only the white candle at the summit of the hearse now remains, and this is removed and hidden at the conclusion of the service. There can, I think, be no reasonable doubt that the name *Tenebrae* is connected with this very striking feature, which marks the ceremonial of these three days.

It is true there have been a good many variations in different times as to the manner in which it has been carried out—the number of the candles for instance, and time and manner of extinguishing them. Thus we are told :

In some churches all the candles were extinguished at once, in several by a hand made of wax to represent

that of Judas; in others they were quenched by a moist sponge passed over them to shew the death of Christ, and on the next day fire was struck from a flint, by which they were again kindled, to shew His resurrection. The number of lights was also very different; in some there was a candle corresponding to each psalm and each lesson as well. Thus in some cases we read of twenty-four lights and a number of lamps, in others of thirty, in others of twelve, nine, or even of seven.[1]

None the less, despite these varieties, the practice of extinguishing these lights is most ancient and is clearly described by Amalarius of Metz, the great rubrician, more than a thousand years ago, as something exceptional and peculiar to this season. He indeed seems to have been familiar with a hearse of twenty-four candles, and notes that the candles thus extinguished on the three nights amount to seventy-two, the number of our Lord's disciples.

The Sarum use also prescribed twenty-four candles, as the following rubric shows:

On Maundy Thursday before matins begin twenty-four candles should be placed before the altar, according to the number of the twelve prophets and the twelve apostles, and lit before the office begins. Of these one should be extinguished at the beginning of each antiphon in the psalms and each responsory in the lessons. For there are just so many candles as

[1] England, *Ceremonies of Holy Week*, p. 50.

there are antiphons and responsories, and this signifies the cruelty of the Jews against the prophets and apostles. The same should be observed at Matins on Good Friday and Saturday.[1]

We nowadays only count the antiphons. When nine candles, corresponding to the nine responsories, are added to our fifteen, it is obvious that we obtain Amalarius' number, twenty-four.

Although the main reason assigned by Amalarius for the putting out of the lights is the extinction of our joy in Christ, his reference to the disciples seems to have suggested another symbolical explanation to the liturgists who came after. An old English book of instructions explains it thus:

Also at this service be set certain candles in the choir, after the 'use,' in some place more than in some other, as the 'use' is, the which be quenched one after another, in tokening of Christ's disciples, how they went away each after other. But when all these candles be taken away and the light gone, yet one abideth still awhile, till clerks have sung Kyries, and other verses; the which [clerks] betoken the women that made lamentation at Christ's Sepulchre. Then that candle is brought again, and other lights there, and that betokeneth our Lady, as of her all others were informed and taught. Also it betokeneth Christ Himself, that was in His manhood dead and

[1] *Sarum Ordinal*, Ed. W. H. Frere (1901), p. 66 This probably represents the usage of about the year 1210.

laid in Sepulchre, and the third day arose from death to life again, and gave light by love to all that were dead and quenched by despair.

This is the explanation which for nearly a thousand years has been generally received as to the extinction of the candles in Tenebrae. I think however, that it would perhaps be rash to conclude that the putting out of the lights was consciously introduced in order to convey such a signification. Very little of the symbolism in the Church's ritual has come into existence by design. Are we then to accept the theory of the liturgist De Vert and to maintain that the extinction of the candles is due simply to the fact that, the office being originally sung in the early morning, the custom gradually established itself of putting out the candles and lamps as the faint daylight grew stronger? There are various difficulties in the way of accepting such a view, at any rate unreservedly. I am inclined to think that the extinction of the candles in the Frankish and English monasteries arose from an attempt to observe a vaguely understood Roman custom of reciting the nocturns without lights during those three mournful vigils. There can be no doubt that in Rome the office of the Friday and Saturday at any rate was said practically in the dark, 'one lamp being lit to read with.'[1] It seems likely

[1] *Ordo* of St. Amand, ap. Battiffol, *Bréviaire*, p. 334.

that the northern monks found it hard to get through the responsories, lessons, etc., without a better provision of light, but that during Lauds, which being more familiar presented less difficulty, the candles were extinguished either all at once or by instalments. In the case of Rome the office in the dark had a very obvious meaning, for it was limited to the time when Christ lay in the tomb, and we are told distinctly that all the lights were quenched save one, which was carefully tended and kept during this period of darkness and silence, to be brought forth again on Easter morn in symbolic testimony of the resurrection. It would seem that the Frankish practice represents a not too successful attempt to frame some analogous observance in vague imitation of Rome. The origin of the name *Tenebrae*, the service in the 'dark,' is in any case intelligible enough.

The Conclusion of Tenebrae

For those whose understanding of the liturgy, or whose sympathetic perception of at least its broader features, enables them to enter thoroughly into the spirit of the service in which they are taking part, I think there is nothing more impressive in the whole range of the Church's ceremonial than the conclusion of Tenebrae. There are few men so frivolous or so hardened as to remain indifferent either in the presence of death or in the presence of that deep grief which death has

caused. In the office of Tenebrae we feel that we have been assisting at the funeral service in which the widowed Church bewails her Bridegroom, the Bridegroom who has laid down His life for His spouse. Although the office of Good Friday morning may be looked upon as a solemn commemoration of the scene of Calvary itself, still it is obviously only a commemoration. But the desolation and anguish which breathe in that three days' dirge over our crucified Redeemer is no mere figure, it is the reality. The spirit of the whole is summed up in the last Responsory of the third nocturn of Good Friday.

Mine eyes do fail with tears, because the Comforter that should relieve me is far from me. Behold, O all ye nations, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.

Verse. O all ye that pass by, behold and see.

Answer. If there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. Mine eyes do fail with tears, because the Comforter that should relieve me is far from me. Behold, O all ye nations, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.

And on each night the climax of the desolation is reached in that brief concluding portion of the service which follows the chanting of the *Benedictus*. It is as though as far as outward manifestations are concerned the mourner's grief had spent itself. For two long hours her wailing, her reproaches, her denunciations, as she passes swiftly from mood to mood, have filled our ears.

Now she has no strength left to cry aloud, the prayer she breathes, whispered and broken, which friends alone are meant to hear, marks the very acme of her grief. And then at a signal given, silently, sadly the assistants withdraw and leave her in her loneliness.

Such is the impression which the conclusion of the Tenebrae seems to me designedly to give. The Canticle of Zachary has filled the building with its rich harmonies. It tells of glorious promises, promises of what might have been, now apparently frustrated by death. A mournful antiphon precedes and follows, checking as it were the note of joy. Thus on the Wednesday evening:

Verse. Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted.
Answer. Which did eat of My bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me.
Antiphon before and after the Benedictus. Now he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast.

The whole pathos of the betrayal finds expression in these simple words.

Even on the Friday, when the Church is already looking forward to the Resurrection, the chanting dies away upon the note:

There were women sitting over against the sepulchre weeping and making lamentation for the Lord.

Before the *Benedictus* is over, all the candles upon the altar and throughout the church have

been extinguished, save only that which surmounts the triangular candlestick. While the antiphon is still ringing in our ears, this remaining light is removed and hidden under the altar at the Epistle corner. Then in the silence that succeeds are spoken or sung the words :

Christus factus est, etc. Christ, for our sakes, became obedient unto death.

There are a few moments of absolute stillness again, during which the Our Father is repeated inaudibly. Then in a voice which can just be heard, *aliquantulum altius*, the celebrant recites the psalm *Miserere*, those around him answering the alternate verses. Afterwards in the same low tone he says the deeply touching prayer *Respice*, the more impressive in its simplicity because on these three days the Church uses it to conclude all her offices and even the grace after meals.

Lord, we beseech Thee, behold this Thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross. [Who liveth and reigneth, etc.]

But the conclusion, 'Who liveth and reigneth,' etc., is hushed into stillness. There are a few moments' pause, and then, says the rubric, some considerable noise is made, the hidden light is put

back upon the candlestick, and all rise and depart in silence.

It should be noticed that the solemn antiphon *Christus factus est*, chanted shortly before the final *Miserere*, is augmented each evening. On the Wednesday we hear only :

Christ, for our sakes, became obedient unto death.

On the Thursday :

Christ, for our sakes, became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

On the Friday, when the glory of the Resurrection is already foreseen :

Christ, for our sakes, became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name.

The whole of this conclusion of the service is so marvellously impressive that it seems at first difficult to reconcile oneself to the custom observed in the Sistine Chapel of chanting instead of reciting the final *Miserere*. This harmonized *Miserere* has always been held, however, to be one of the gems of the whole service. Mendelssohn, not too indulgent a critic, speaks feelingly of the profound impression which it made on him.

In mediæval England, at Rouen and in other places, a rite was observed for the close of Tenebrae which would seem at first sight to be less impres-

sive than the severe simplicity which marks the ordinary Roman practice. St. Æthelwold, however, in the *Concordia Regularis*, written before the year 1,000, speaks with quite unwonted emphasis of the solemn effect produced by a ceremonial in substance identical with that to which I am referring. He implies that he had introduced it into his own Ordinal, precisely because he had learnt that in other monasteries many had thereby been moved to deep compunction of spirit. At the same time, the adoption of this practice was left optional.[1] I recall it here in the form which it afterwards assumed in the Sarum Ordinal of about 1210.

The *Benedictus* finished with its antiphons, let two clerks of the second form, without change of habit, standing before the altar, but turned to the choir, say thrice *Kyrie eleison*. Then let two deacons of the second form, standing before the entrance of the choir, say *Domine miserere*, while the choir responds *Christus Dominus factus est obediens usque ad mortem*. Again let the two clerks before the altar say once *Christe eleison*. After this two of the seniors standing in front of the choir step, must sing this versicle, *Qui passurus advenisti*, etc. When this is finished the two clerks before the altar again say *Christe eleison*, and the seniors this time recite the verse *Qui expansis in cruce*, etc. Once again the clerks before the altar

[1] Migne, *P.L.* 137. 490. Qui autem noluerint ad hoc agendum minime compellantur.

repeat *Christe eleison*, and the seniors now the verse *Qui prophetice*. When the verse is over the deacons before the entrance of the choir again say *Domine miserere* and the choir *Christus Dominus* as before. Lastly, the clerks before the altar repeat *Kyrie eleison* again thrice, and the deacons and choir again *Domine miserere* and *Christus Dominus*.

When this is all over, let a boy with a very clear voice say *Mortem autem crucis*.

Then all prostrate themselves and each one says *Pater noster*, and every couple privately repeat the *Miserere* together, along with the prayer *Respice quæsumus*, until finally, when the senior gives the signal by knocking, all rise up and the light is brought forth.[1]

It seems a little difficult to understand why this rather complicated ceremonial should have been considered so impressive. What we probably fail to realize in merely reading the bald rubrics, is the weird effect produced by these petitions for mercy and these prostrations, when carried on in total darkness. The clear boys' voices singing the *Kyrie eleison* near the altar, the deacons in turn responding for the side of the nave, while the seniors chant longer antiphons in yet another position, must have left an impression of struggle with the powers of evil, which was heightened by the eventual reappearance of the light symbolical of Christ's resurrection and victory over death.

[1] *Sarum Ordinal*, Ed. W. H. Frere, p. 67.

And this is in fact what St. Æthelwold suggests To translate quite literally: 'This practice,' he says, 'of ecclesiastical compunction was invented, I think, by the faithful for this end, that both the horror of darkness, which during the Lord's Passion smote with unwonted terror the threefold world, as well as the consolation of the Apostles' preaching, which made known to all the earth that Christ suffered obedient unto death for the salvation of the human race, might thereby be most vividly portrayed.'

With regard to the noise made at the end before the candle is brought from behind the altar, I am afraid that the explanation usually found in the Holy Week books cannot be historically justified. It is made, they remark, to represent the confusion of nature at the death of its Author, or, as the old *Liber Festivalis*, which I quoted not long since, tells us, 'The strokes that the priest giveth on the book betokeneth the claps of thunder, when Christ brake hell gates, and despoiled them, and set out Adam and Eve and all that He had bought with His bitter Passion.' I fear, however, that historically speaking a much more prosaic account must be given of this noise. When the public recitation of office was concluded, the abbot or presiding prelate always gave the signal for the monks to move out of the choir by knocking the bench, or by one of those wooden clappers which may still be seen abroad used for this purpose. There is little doubt that the noise at the end of

Tenebrae has no other origin than this. The pious imaginations of the mediæval liturgists sought for mystical meanings everywhere and found them, but let me repeat that there is no disrespect to our sacred ceremonies involved in attributing to them in many cases a quite matter-of-fact origin. The symbolism of any rite depends not upon the fact that it was designed with a mystical intention by its first inventors, but only upon this, that under the providence of God and with the tacit approva of Holy Church, a certain meaning has become attached to it in the minds of the faithful. The word clock, it has been said in an earlier chapter, was originally used to designate a *clacking* thing which made a noise—and so a bell; but it would be the height of absurdity for any one to insist that it must mean a bell now and not a timepiece. Thus many of our most beautiful pieces of symbolism are certainly after-thoughts which never entered into the mind of the framers of the ceremony (we shall see an admirable instance later in the incense grains for the paschal candle); but some even of the most fanciful interpretations can plead a venerable antiquity, and the symbolism is true and deserves respect the moment it is generally accepted by the faithful at large.

It would seem that this knocking in the later Middle Ages often tended to become riotous and disorderly. In this matter again Kirchmeyer's *Popish Kingdom* probably satirizes a real abuse, although its language is much exaggerated.

The sexton straightway putteth out the candles
speedily,
And straight the priest with lusty throat aloud begins
to cry;
Then furious rage begins to spring, and hurly-burly
rise,
On pews and desks and seats they bounce and beat
in dreadful wise.
Thou wouldst suppose they were possessed with spirits
and devils all,
Or fury such as forceth them that upon Bacchus
call.
Some beaten down with clubs and staves among the
pews do lie—

with much more to the same effect. No doubt there were extravagances perpetrated in this matter, and we hear in Spain, for instance, of guns being fired off outside the church, but in England, if the Sarum rubric was faithfully observed, there seems to have been little ground for complaint.

In conclusion I would urge upon my readers to do all in their power to take part in this nocturnal prayer of the Church on these three days, when it is brought within their reach. All through the year, when the faithful at large are taking their rest, the religious who rise to say the night office are interceding for them. At this season alone it is possible for all, almost without trouble, to associate themselves with the official prayer of the Church. After the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass itself, no rite is more venerable or more intimately

associated with the life of the Church from its very first beginnings.

It is a little curious that two of the pagan writers who are the earliest to mention the religious peculiarities of Christians seem to speak of this night-watching. Pliny reports that the Christians whom he arrested and examined told him 'that they were accustomed on certain days to assemble before daybreak and to sing among themselves (*secum invicem*) alternately, songs (*carmen*) to Christ as to God.' This, observe, is less than a hundred years after our Lord's Ascension, and about fifty years later still we find Lucian ridiculing the Christians for remaining awake all night, in order to sing hymns, instead of going to bed. If we are not able to make a sacrifice of our sleep as was done even by the laity in the first ages of the Church, we have not the same excuse for declining to take part in this solemn commemoration of the vigils sanctified by so much faith and devotion, when they are brought, as it were, home to our very doors.

CHAPTER VII

Maundy Thursday

It is an indication of the very composite character of the mysteries commemorated on Maundy Thursday that we find in the book known as the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, which is practically the earliest complete Mass-book preserved to us, three separate Masses assigned to this day. The first of these is provided for the reconciliation of penitents, the second is headed *missa chrismalis*, being intended for the consecration of the holy oils, the third is an evening Mass (*missa ad vesperum*) and commemorates the Supper of the Lord (*cœna Domini*), from which is derived the heading which at present stands in our Missals. From an early date, however, these were replaced by a single Mass, and then the reconciliation of penitents was performed at the beginning, the consecration of the holy oils was begun before the *Pater noster* and proceeded with afterwards, and the Holy Communion was administered in its natural place to the clergy and the faithful who assisted. Besides this, from at least the

seventh century the ceremony was introduced known as the *mandatum*, the *Maundy*, or washing of the feet, for which the Church has provided a special ritual; and at a later period the religious observances of the day were further complicated by the denudation and washing of the altars, the *processus* or public announcement of excommunications, and most recently of all by the procession of the Blessed Sacrament and Its reservation with fitting solemnity at some altar or chapel apart. Amongst these and other observances connected with Maundy Thursday it will be best to speak first and most fully of those which are familiar to the laity from what they may still see carried out in our churches.

The 'Gloria in Excelsis'

The earlier portion of the Mass on Maundy Thursday does not notably differ from the ritual observed on festivals throughout the year. Despite the associations of Passiontide the Church will not repress the manifestation of her joy in, and thanksgiving for, the glorious gift bestowed upon her this day. In every part of the Christian world it is clear that it was kept as a feast as early as we have records of any sort. At Jerusalem Egeria lets us know that the Holy Sacrifice was offered on this day in the court or chapel called *ad crucem*, probably the spot where the relic of the true Cross was kept, the only day of

the year when Mass was celebrated there. At this Mass, which was said in the middle of the afternoon, all the people communicated. In Africa in the time of St. Augustine, two Masses were said, one in the morning, the other in the evening. With regard to the practice of Constantinople an extant homily of St. Chrysostom's for this day attests the veneration with which it was regarded, and in Rome it was looked upon as one of the primitive feasts ranking next to Easter and Whit-Sunday. Throughout all the middle ages the tradition was retained. As Durandus, the great rubricist, expresses it, 'On this day was instituted the Sacrament of sacraments, and therefore to honour the glorious commemoration of the new Sacrifice . . . the Church in her Mass sings canticles of joy, excepting only the Alleluia. High Mass is celebrated with harmony of music and the display of rich vestments as upon the feast of Christ's Nativity, for this festival surpasses all save the feast of the Holy Trinity.' In our modern practice accordingly the altar is decorated, the crucifix and tabernacle are veiled in white, the sacred ministers wear rich vestments, and the music in the earlier part of the Mass is accompanied with the organ. But the most striking manifestation of the joy of this celebration is now shown in the ringing of the bells at the *Gloria*. The rubric in the Missal says *pulsantur campanæ*, and the direction is generally carried out by jangling every bell in

the church, big and little, during all the time that the celebrant is reciting the *Gloria* at the altar.

Let me confess that at first sight it seems a little difficult to discern the appropriateness of this observance. On Christmas morning it would be intelligible enough that the *Gloria in excelsis* should be received with an outburst of joy and exultation. The connexion of the angelic hymn with the feast is immediate and obvious. But why, it will be asked, make so much of the *Gloria* on Maundy Thursday? Surely it has no relation to the Mystery commemorated then, and it is not even an essential or primitive part of the liturgy of the Mass.

I can only guess at the explanation of this difficulty, but I will try to answer as best I can. The *Gloria in excelsis* is a Greek hymn,[1] which is undoubtedly very ancient. It belonged originally to the night office, and it has only come by degrees to form part of the Mass in the Western Church. Pope St. Telesphorus, A.D. 129, is said to have introduced it for the midnight Mass on Christmas day; Pope St. Symmachus is reported to have extended its use to all Sundays and the festivals of martyrs. If, however, we may trust a rubric which appears on the first page of the

[1] It seems to have been long customary in many parts of the West to recite it in Greek like the *Kyrie eleison*. It occurs in this form in several Anglo-Saxon MSS., written phonetically in Latin letters.

Gregorian Sacramentary, only bishops were privileged to recite the *Gloria* on these occasions; a simple priest was never permitted to do so except on Easter Sunday. This restriction fell into desuetude by degrees, but even as late as Berno of Reichenau, who died in 1048, it seems that there were still some who maintained that simple priests were bound to abstain from saying the *Gloria*. Apart from the *Ordines Romani*, the only statement that I have been able to find specially connecting the *Gloria* with Maundy Thursday occurs in a letter of Pope Nicholas I, about the year 866, enjoining that Bishops should recite it always on that day, presumably at the Solemn Mass at which the holy oils were consecrated.[1]

I am driven then to offer a conjecture of my own to explain the ringing of the bells on Maundy Thursday at precisely this portion of the service. There seems to be little doubt that the practice of marking the three most solemn days of Holy Week by a repression of all external signs of joy was both ancient and widespread. It has already been pointed out in the chapter on Tenebrae that alike in Rome, in the Frankish dominions and in England from the seventh century onwards the office on these three nights was in one way

[1] In the Einsiedeln *Ordo* we read: 'Et post kirieleyson dominus apostolicus dicit *Gloria in excelsis Deo*.' See Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 481. Mabillon's *Ordo I.* agrees with this.

or another recited almost in darkness. Now it was natural that the use of bells and musical instruments should be considered not less inappropriate to the solemn mysteries of this season than the use of lights, and so in fact we do find that they were laid aside for these three days, and that the duty of silence was earnestly impressed even upon the laity living in the world. But as to the exact moment when this period of silence began there appears to have been the greatest diversity of practice. According to the first Roman *Ordo* the bells were not to be rung after the beginning of Matins on the first of these nights, that between Wednesday and Thursday. According to the tenth *Ordo*, the exact time was marked by the beginning of the Mass after the reconciliation of the penitents on the Thursday morning. This is getting nearer to the time of our *Gloria*, but then on the other hand Durandus the liturgist, who wrote at a still later date, tells us that the silence began either after Prime or after Vespers on the Thursday, evidently knowing of no uniform rule or tradition on the subject. Amalarius at an earlier period speaks of the use of wooden clappers instead of bells during these three days both in his own country and in Rome,[1] and he connects this cessation from such noisier forms of salutation with the horror felt by Christians at this season for the treacherous salutation

[1] Amalarius, *De Eccl. Officiis*, bk. iv. c. 21.

of Judas. In the Exeter Pontifical of Bishop Lacey, written in the fourteenth century, it is said that on Maundy Thursday the Bishop is to go in solemn procession to the altar for the beginning of Mass, the servers carrying candles and thuribles and the text of the Gospels, during which procession to the altar the bells are to ring, and then after that not again until the *Gloria in excelsis* of Holy Saturday. In the York Missal, on the other hand, no stress is laid upon the procession, but a rubric says, *Classicum pulsetur* ('Let the great bells be rung') during the *Gloria*.[1]

From all this it seems clear that the commencement of the silence with the *Gloria* on Maundy Thursday is purely accidental. I am inclined to think that it is simply an imitation of the older and more definite practice of ringing the bells and playing the organ at the *Gloria* on Holy Saturday. On that day there is the clearest reason for selecting this moment for such a manifestation. As will be seen in the chapter on Holy Saturday, there being no Introit, and the *Kyrie* forming part of the Litany the words *Gloria in excelsis* are really the first words of the Mass, the first Mass celebrated in the joy of Christ's Resurrection. No wonder that such a

[1] At Sarum the Consuetudinary (c. 1210) rules that the bells were to be rung for Vespers on the Wednesday and down to the time of Mass (*usque ad Missam*) on the next morning; but after that not until the *Gloria in excelsis* on the Saturday. Frere, i. 140.

moment was marked by every demonstration of gladness, by the removal of all the garb of mourning, the pealing of the organ, the ringing of bells, and of old the lighting of lamps. On the other hand no such precise moment could be fixed for the beginning of that special season of grief sug-

CANONS WASHING THE FEET OF CHILDREN IN FRENCH CATHEDRAL. (*From Picart's 'Cérémonies.'*)

gested by the memory of Christ's passion, but by degrees the custom established itself of imitating in the *Gloria* of Holy Thursday that outburst of joy, which is only natural and intelligible at the conclusion of the Easter vigil.

It is interesting to note that the three days during which the bells were silent seem to have been

known among our Saxon forefathers by a definite name, the 'still days.' It was not merely that the clang of bells and the sound of music was no longer heard, but they seem to have interpreted this silence almost like the silence of a monastic rule. Consequently Ælfric tells us that 'Church customs forbid any sermon to be said on the three still days.'[1] Similarly John Myrc several centuries later in his *Liber Festivalis*, when discussing the origin of the name *Tenebrae*, and the reason why there are these special services at this season, comments as follows:

The third cause is the darkness when Christ was nailed on the cross, feet and hands, hanging three hours from undern (10 o'clock) till noon. Then the sun withdrew her light, and was dark through all the world, showing that the Maker of light was at that time pined to death. For these three causes the service of the night is done in darkness, the which service maketh mind how Judas betrayed Christ, and how the Jews came as privily as they could for dread of the common people; wherefore at the service is no bell rung, but a sound made of the tree, whereby all Christian people may have knowledge to come to this service privily without making of any noise, and all that the people should speak of coming and going

[1] A twelfth-century English homily says: 'Between His passion and His resurrection He (Christ) lay in the sepulchre and was still, and for that cause the three days before Easter are called "still-days" (*swidages*).' Morris, *Old English Homilies* (E.E.T.S.), 2nd Series, p. 101.

should sound of the tree, that is the cross that our Lord was done on.

Judas and the Betrayal

The joy of the commemoration of our Saviour's greatest and best of gifts, symbolized in the exulting *Gloria*, are brought into very close and direct contrast with the sorrow which overshadows the Mass which follows. The echoes of the music have hardly died away when the priest after the usual salutation to the people and *Oremus* sings the following prayer. It is a curious prayer, and strange to say it is repeated in the Good Friday service, again occupying the place which would ordinarily be assigned to the Collect of the day.

DEUS, a quo et Judas reatus sui pœnam, et confessionis suæ latro præmium sumpsit: concede nobis tuæ propitiationis effectum; ut sicut in passione sua Jesus Christus Dominus noster diversa utrisque intulit stipendia meritorum: ita nobis, ablato vetustatis errore, resurrectionis suæ gratiam largiatur. Qui tecum vivit et regnat, etc.

O GOD, from whom Judas received the punishment of his sin and the thief the reward of his confession; grant us the effects of Thy mercy; that as our Lord Jesus Christ in His passion bestowed on both different rewards of their merits; so having destroyed the old man in us He may give us the grace of His resurrection. Who liveth and reigneth, etc.

Amongst the most cherished art treasures of the British Museum is a series of four small panels of carved ivory pronounced to be of the fifth century, which once apparently formed the sides of a casket. One of these contains a representation of the crucifixion, and it may dispute with the celebrated carved doors of St. Sabina in Rome the honour of being the earliest known attempt to represent in art the manner of our Saviour's death upon the cross.[1] In the carving of St. Sabina our Lord is hanging between the two thieves, but in the British Museum carving the thieves are not represented. On the other hand, nearly half the panel is occupied by the figure of Judas hanging by a rope from a fruit-bearing tree (the tree of knowledge of good and evil ?), a serpent at its foot, while the traitor's bag is represented on the ground beneath him with the money pouring out of it. The two figures, Christ upon the glorious tree of Life and Judas upon the tree of shame, are contrasted and balanced as it were the one against the other: Judas is dying alone and disregarded, but beside the cross of Christ are standing St. John and His blessed Mother, and in the adjacent panel we have depicted the glorious triumph of His Resur-

[1] By the kind permission of Mr. C. H. Read, keeper of the department of British and Mediæval Antiquities at the British Museum, the engraving of this ivory panel prepared for one of the official Guide Books has been reproduced to serve as a frontispiece to the present volume.

rection. This is not quite the only instance in early Christian art in which the death of our Blessed Lord and His betrayer are contrasted, and even if these examples failed us, it would only be necessary to turn to such specimens of our early liturgy as are afforded by the offices of the Church for this season, to understand to what an extraordinary degree the treason of Judas seems to have stamped itself upon the minds of our Christian forefathers. We might almost call this Thursday of Holy Week the commemoration or rather the execration of the crime of Judas, for beyond even the memory of God's priceless blessings, more even than the desire to intercede for the penitents and the neophytes who attracted so much interest at this holy time, the cruel treachery of the betrayal is insisted upon again and again in almost every antiphon and prayer. I would only ask the reader to cast a glance at the *Tenebrae* service now sung on Wednesday evening, the Matins and Lauds, it will be remembered, of the Thursday, to convince himself of this. There is hardly a responsory or an antiphon which does not contain an allusion open or veiled to the betrayal. Take for instance the eighth responsory for this day:

Could ye not watch with Me one hour, ye that called one on the other to die for Me? Or see ye not Judas, how that he sleepeth not, but maketh haste to betray Me to the Jews?

Verse. Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Answer. Or see ye not Judas, how that he sleepeth not, but maketh haste to betray Me to the Jews?

It would seem that 'The Betrayal' (*traditio*) was accepted in many churches as one of the titles of the feast of Maundy Thursday, and even in our existing Mass, as may be seen in the Missal, it is curious how the word *traditio* recurs several times over, though not consistently in the same sense.[1] In the Secret the phrase *hodierna traditione* seems to refer to our Lord's surrender of Himself to us in the Blessed Eucharist; but in the special *Communicantes* in the Canon, a rare privilege which this day shares with a few other festivals of the year, we are said to commemorate the day 'on which Jesus Christ our Lord was betrayed for us' (*quo Dominus noster Jesus Christus pro nobis est traditus*). So again in the old *Gelasian Sacramentary* for the *Pridie quam pateretur*, 'the day before He suffered,' of the Canon, was substituted *pridie quam traderetur*. 'the day before He was betrayed.' But the most curious monument perhaps of the deep impression made by the treachery and sacrilege of the unfaithful disciple upon the minds of the first framers of our liturgy is to be found in the Preface of the third Mass *in Cœna Domini* of

[1] It can hardly be necessary to point out that the word *traditio* in Latin may mean either *betrayal* or *self-surrender*, i.e. oblation.

the *Gelasian Sacramentary*. It has of course long disappeared from the liturgy, but it presents such a vivid illustration of the spirit in which the special prayers for this day were compiled that I venture to set before the reader a translation of it here.

It is truly meet and just, etc., . . . through Christ our Lord, whose reproach this night mid sacred feastings the guilty soul of the traitor could no longer endure; but leaving the company of the Apostles he accepted blood-money of the Jews that the life which he had marred he might also destroy. Wherefore on this night the betrayer supped his own death, and ere he went forth received bread with blood-stained hands from the hands of the Saviour; that nourished with such food, a heavier punishment should press upon him, whom not even pity allied with reward could deter from his crime; and thus our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son did endure to share His last supper with a foe by whom He knew that forthwith He should be betrayed, that He might bequeath to all ages an example of gentleness, and supply by His Passion for the redemption of the world. And so the savage Judas is fed by the God of meekness, who suffers at His table the presence of a guest so ferocious that at the last after plotting to take the life of his Master, he ended by slaying himself with his own rope.

O how all-patient a Lord! O how meek a lamb self-surrendered for the banquet! for while that food was yet in his mouth, Judas was hounding on the

Jewish slaughterers to the rending of its limbs. But Thy Son our Lord patiently allowed Himself to be immolated to Thee as a holy Victim in our behalf, and undid that sin which the world had done. Through Him, O Lord, we suppliants entreat Thee with suppliant voice, etc.

I think it is fair to infer from all this that the tradition of the early Church, so far as there was any tradition, speaks strongly in favour of the view that Judas did receive the Blessed Eucharist sacrilegiously at the last supper.

It is curious that in more than one signification the name Judas survived in connexion with our old English ceremonies for Holy Week. The wooden dummy which often formed the shaft of the paschal candle was apparently commonly known as the Judas ; so also the *Tenebrae* hearse or triangular candlestick seems to have been sometimes called the Judas, and the name was further applied to the extinguishers made for putting out candles.

The Mass 'In Cœna Domini'

The prominence given to the fate of Judas is only one of many various elements which may be discerned in our existing Mass for Maundy Thursday. In passing to the extract from the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, which is read as the Epistle of the day, we are once more reminded of the primary object of the cele-

bration, viz., the institution of the Blessed Sacrament by our Lord, *in qua nocte tradebatur*, 'that same night on which He was betrayed.' Even here we do not wholly lose sight of the traitor, and St. Paul in solemn and impressive words warns the Christians he is addressing that: 'he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord.' For the Gospel, there is not read, as we might expect, any one of the accounts of the sublime mysteries which were enacted at the Last Supper, but the passage selected is the narrative given by St. John of the washing of the feet. And here again we are reminded:—'And when supper was done, (the devil having now put it into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon, the Iscariot, to betray Him),' etc.; but the extract was no doubt suggested by the practice of the *Maundy* (*Mandatum*) from which we take the name now given to this day in modern English. But of this something must be said later.

There is not very much which need detain us in the remainder of the Mass. The antiphon for the Offertory, *Dextera Domini fecit virtutem*, etc., 'The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength,' may probably owe its occurrence in this place to a survival from one of the Masses for the days of scrutiny. The candidates for baptism had to undergo a series of examinations, as we have seen, during the last weeks of Lent,

and on occasion of these *scrutinia*, the prayers of the stational Mass were generally framed with a view to the spiritual needs of the catechumens. Now this verse of the psalm appears to have been understood to bear a special reference to baptism. It occurs again as the antiphon for the Offertory on the Tuesday in the third week of Lent, which was probably the day for commencing the series of scrutinies in the Roman Church. 'The right hand of the Lord,' as all will be aware who have at any time interested themselves in early Christian art, is constantly introduced into all compositions which symbolize any pre-eminent work of grace such as the administration of the sacraments. If a Christian artist wished to represent a baptism, he was not content to depict the water and the figures of the baptizer and the baptized, but in the sky above he introduced 'the right hand of the Lord' to symbolize the power which gave efficacy to the material rite.[1] So too we find that a very ancient font, described by Paciaudi and referred to in the chapter on Holy Saturday, contains amongst certain representations of the exorcisms and preliminary ceremonies of baptism, a severed

[1] A good example of this is seen in the ivory carving, p. 430, reproduced by the kind permission of the authorities from the British Museum *Guide to Early Christian Antiquities*. This ivory of the sixth century probably formed part of the casing of a wooden box or coffer. The coffer itself may have been intended to be used as a *pyxis* or as a shrine for relics; but I should prefer to believe that it was connected in some way with the sacrament of Baptism. It may have held the vessel of chrism or the salt used in one of the scrutinies.

arm and hand in the attitude of blessing, and above it a contracted inscription which long defied all attempts to decipher it until the scholar I have named proved conclusively that it represents the words, *Dextera Domini fecit virtutem*, etc. It is possible, however, that the occurrence of the words in this place may have reference to the stupendous work of grace which is manifested in the sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist rather than to that of Baptism.

Of the other exceptional features in the Mass of Maundy Thursday there is little to be said. I have already alluded to the singular privilege which this day has retained of modifying the Canon of the Mass. Although on a few of the very greatest feasts a special adaptation of the *Communicantes* and the *Hanc igitur* has been allowed to remain in the Roman Missal, still there are only two festivals in the year, Easter and Pentecost, which admit of change in both prayers, and in each case the same modification of the *Hanc igitur* is used to beg a special blessing of God during the octave upon the catechumens who have been baptized on the eves of Easter and Whitsunday. Maundy Thursday, therefore, stands absolutely alone in this among all the feasts of the year, that on this day *three* changes are made in the Canon, in the prayer *Communicantes*, in the *Hanc igitur*, and in the *Qui pridie*. I will print that portion of all three which contains anything special to this day, italicizing the words

which are not to be found in the ordinary Canon ; for it is reasonable to infer that the Church must wish to impress upon us very solemnly and emphatically the words for the sake of which she makes such an unwonted departure from all her rules. The beginning of the *Communicantes* accordingly runs thus :

COMMUNICANTES, *et diem sacratissimum celebrantes, quo Dominus noster Jesus Christus pro nobis est traditus :* sed et memoriam venerantes in primis gloriosæ semper virginis Mariæ, etc.

COMMUNICATING *and celebrating this most sacred day, in which our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed for us :* and also honouring in the first place the memory of the ever glorious Virgin Mary, etc.

In the *Hanc igitur* the change is of much the same nature.

HANC igitur oblationem servitutis nostræ, sed et cunctæ familiæ tuæ, *quam tibi offerimus ob diem, in qua Dominus noster Jesus Christus tradidit discipulis suis corporis et sanguinis sui mysteria celebranda* ; quæsumus Domine, ut placatus accipias, diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, etc.

WE therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, graciously to accept this offering of our service, and of Thy whole family, which we make to Thee *in memory of the day in which our Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to celebrate the mysteries of His body and blood :* order also our days in Thy peace, etc.

In the *Qui pridie* the fact that this is the very anniversary of the first Mass is made real to us.

QUI pridie quam *pro nostra omniumque salute pateretur, hoc est hodie,* accepit panem, etc.

WHO the day before He suffered *for the salvation of us and all men, that is, on this day,* took bread, etc.

That the kiss of peace should be omitted may possibly be due to the cause which nearly all mediæval liturgists assign for it : namely, that it is intended to express detestation for the treachery of Judas. Some authorities, however, have sought to explain it by a feature in the ceremony for the consecration of the holy oils, wherein the vessel containing the holy chrism is kissed ; and although the prominence of Judas in the mind of the Church all during the Mass is most remarkable, this seems on the whole the most probable solution.

The Veneration of the Blessed Sacrament

It would seem that in earlier ages the Church, while fully recognizing this day as the feast of the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, did not at the same time adopt any exceptional mode of showing her veneration for the Body of the Lord, beyond what was implied in the solemn celebration of the liturgy and in a general Communion. As regards the Communion, it is still the law of the Church that all priests and clerics are bound

on this day to receive Communion from the hand of the celebrant in the church to which they belong. That one priest only should say Mass in each church seems to be due to the wish to reproduce as far as possible the conditions under which our Blessed Lord first said Mass in the midst of His Apostles. It must be remembered also that in the primitive Church the normal condition of things was that the Bishop should alone offer the Holy Sacrifice on festivals, while his priests assisted and communicated at his Mass or perhaps concelebrated with him. Although the rule forbidding that more than one Mass should be said in each church on Maundy Thursday does not seem to have been so absolute in the Middle Ages as at present, still some restriction appears always to have been observed. In the time of St. Augustine the desire to reproduce as nearly as possible the conditions under which the Holy Sacrifice was offered at the Last Supper was so strong, that the Mass was celebrated in the evening, and the faithful took their meal immediately before, making it, apparently, a sort of duty on that day to break their fast before communicating.[1] This custom of dispensing with the fast on that one occasion in the year was expressly recognized by the Council of Carthage in 397, which imposed at the same time a strict obliga-

[1] Cf. Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 248.

tion upon those who wished to celebrate of observing the fast on all other days.

But in our churches at the present time the feature in the service which more than any other directs attention to the Blessed Sacrament is the procession to the altar of repose. Just before the Holy Communion is to be distributed, the second Host, which was consecrated at that Mass to serve for the rite of the next day, is placed in a chalice, is covered with a pall and the inverted paten, and is enveloped in a veil of white silk. This chalice so covered remains in the centre of the altar, until, at the conclusion of the Mass, a procession is formed and the celebrant, under a canopy, assisted by deacon and subdeacon, conveys the chalice and its contents to some little chapel or altar becomingly prepared, where it is kept with every mark of honour until after the veneration of the Cross upon Good Friday. That the Sacred Host should be deposited in a chalice covered with a paten rather than in a ciborium or pyx is simply due to the fact that in the service of the next day the chalice is used for the wine and water, into which, during the short Mass of the Presanctified, a portion of the Blessed Sacrament is allowed to fall. To return however to the procession. It may be noted that the actual rubrics of the Missal and of the *Cæremoniale* give a good deal of prominence to this feature of the service. The latter authoritative work for instance prescribes that even although the Bishop

should be unable to sing the Mass, he is not to neglect to carry the Blessed Sacrament to the altar of repose. This is the more remarkable, because in the old Pontificals there is no mention of a solemn procession. The practice of bringing the second Host in state to the place prepared for it, although alluded to as early as the time of Lanfranc, seems only to have become generally established towards the end of the fifteenth century. The feast of Corpus Christi had then been established for nearly two hundred years, and the custom was accordingly introduced that the beautiful hymn of St. Thomas Aquinas, *Pange lingua gloriosi Corporis mysterium*, originally written for Corpus Christi, should be sung during the procession of Maundy Thursday also. Its appropriateness in this place cannot be questioned. Although no translation can do justice to the beautiful original, I quote the first three stanzas of Dr. Neale's version, as being a good deal superior to that usually found in our Holy Week books.

Of the glorious body telling,
  Now, my tongue, its mysteries sing,
And the Blood, all price excelling,
  Which the world's Eternal King,
In a Virgin's womb once dwelling,
  Shed for this world's ransoming.

Giv'n for us and condescending
  To be born for us below.

He, with men in converse blending,
Dwelt, the seed of truth to sow,
Till He closed, in wondrous ending,
His appointed life of woe.

That last night, at supper lying,
With the Apostolic band,
Jesus, with the law complying,
Keeps the Feast its rites command;
Then to them, as food undying,
Gives Himself with His own Hand.

Before the procession with which we are familiar became the general practice it would seem that the second consecrated Host was reserved from the Thursday until the Friday morning in the most informal way, being merely taken by the deacon from the altar after the Communion, and locked up in any convenient receptacle. The question may be asked, indeed, How is it that at the present time it is customary to watch before the Blessed Sacrament, and to surround it with so many marks of respect, during the time it remains at the altar of repose, seeing that after all it is enclosed in a tabernacle and in no way exposed to view? I am inclined to suggest in answer to such a question that at the time the present practice was established, the whole of the ceremonial observed towards the Blessed Sacrament was in a transition stage. It is certain that in the sixteenth century the mere presence of the Holy Eucharist upon the altar, even though locked up in the tabernacle, was held

to require many marks of respect from the assistants which are now only paid to the Blessed Sacrament when exposed; for instance it was thought unbecoming for anybody under such

MEDIÆVAL 'TABERNACLES' FOR HOLDING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. (*From Rohault de Fleury, 'La Messe.'*)

circumstances, to remain in the sanctuary seated with his head covered. Also it is possible that some confusion of practice has resulted from the ambiguity of the word *tabernaculum*. By *tabernaculum* in the Middle Ages might equally well

be meant either a small vessel like a ciborium, or a stone or metal cupboard; and I am inclined to think that the honours paid to the Blessed Sacrament, when reserved in the small receptacle, were continued to it sometimes, when it was securely locked away in the larger one.

A similar difficulty has also been felt at times with regard to the name given to the chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is enshrined. Some speak of it as the 'sepulchre' and others as the 'altar of repose.'[1] Which is correct? There can, I think, be little doubt that the former name is only used through a confusion with something quite different. Almost everywhere in England in the Middle Ages (as in many parts of Germany to this day) the custom existed of representing in a striking and graphic way the mystery of our Lord's Resurrection. For this purpose a third Host was consecrated at the Mass on Maundy Thursday, which Host was deposited on Good Friday in some 'sepulchre' constructed to represent the tomb of our Blessed Lord. There on Holy Saturday evening or Easter Sunday morning, a solemn service was held, into which certain dramatic elements were freely introduced and

[1] Although the Sacred Congregation of Rites seems to tolerate the name 'sepulchre' as given to the altar of repose, it has consistently refused to allow any external symbol of the burial, e.g. the impressing a seal on the tabernacle door, the singing of the antiphon *Sepulto Domino*, etc., the introducing figures of guards, etc. See decrees S.C.R. December 7, 1844, and most recently, December 15, 1896.

the Blessed Sacrament was taken back in procession with all possible demonstrations of joy to the High Altar of the Church. Of all this we shall have more to say later; but that the chapel where the burial of our Blessed Lord was represented should have been styled the sepulchre was natural enough, and it would seem that the name has been extended from thence to the altar of repose, to which it is not strictly appropriate.

The Washing of the Altars

When once the Mass of Commemoration is completed on Maundy Thursday, and when the Blessed Sacrament has been removed from the altar, the sense of desolation returns with redoubled force. The altars, which represent symbolically the body of Christ, are stripped of their vesture, and it would seem furthermore that the washing and cleansing which the poor and the penitents and the catechumens formerly underwent, partly for mystical reasons connected with our Blessed Lord's preparation for the Last Supper, partly as a very practical measure of cleanliness in preparation for Easter Day, was extended to the altars as well. Perhaps I cannot better introduce my remarks on the topic than by quoting what is to be found on this subject in the old English *Liber Festivalis*:

In these days the clothes of the altar be taken away, for Christ's clothes were taken away from Him,

and so He was done naked on the Cross, save our Lady, His mother, wound a kerchief about Him to cover His members. The altar stone betokeneth Christ's body, that was drawn on the corse as a skin of parchment on a harrow, so that all His bones might be told. That besom that the altar is washed with betokeneth the scourges that they beat our Lord's body with, and the thorns that He was crowned with. The water and the wine that it is washed with betokeneth the blood and the water that ran down from the wound that was in His side pierced with a spear. The wine that is poured upon the altar on the five crosses betokeneth the blood that ran down from the principal wounds of His body. Also this day is no Pax given at the Mass, for Judas betrayed Christ this night with a kiss. Thus was the prophecy of His Passion this day ended; wherefore this night when He hath supped, He made the sacrament of His own body, and gave it to His disciples to eat and drink, and began the Sacrament of the Mass and of the New Law. And after supper He washed His disciples' feet, which was a manner of the New Law full out; for, as He said to Peter: 'he that is washed and is clean of deadly sin had no need to be washed.' Thus it betokened the affliction of deadly sins. Then if people ask why priests do no Mass after supper, as Christ did, say that it (the old custom) was turned into more honesty, and more salvation to man's soul. For, as Haymo telleth upon the epistle of St. Paul, many in the beginning of the faith came to the Church on Shere Thursday, and those that were rich brought meat and drink with them, and ate and drank their

bellies full, and then at night took their housel, and said that Christ gave them example . . . whereas the Epistle of the day telleth, St. Paul rebuked them thereof, and turneth that foulness into more honest cleanness and holiness—that is for to say, at Mass fasting, all the people to take their housel fasting.

In mediæval England, as this passage indirectly suggests, the denuding of the altars was a somewhat more impressive ceremony than it is now with us. In the rubrics of the present Roman Missal we hear nothing about washings, and it is only prescribed that the sacred ministers divest the altars of their coverings and ornaments, reciting the while the antiphon *Diviserunt* (they have divided My garments, etc.) with the Psalm *Deus, Deus meus, respice in me.* This last is the Messianic psalm in which the words *Diviserunt*, etc., occur, and in which the nakedness and ignominy of the suffering Messiah are particularly insisted upon. According to the old English use, however, it was prescribed that after Mass and Vespers were ended dinner should be taken, after which the clergy assembled again, attired in amices and plain albs, to wash all the altars of the church. The water was first blessed outside the choir, and then this water and a vessel of wine were taken to the High Altar, where the five crosses of the altar-slab were washed, first with wine and then with water, 'besoms' of birch-twigs or 'palms' being used in part to

cleanse and dry them. Even with us to-day, palm-branches remaining over from the preceding Sunday are commonly scattered upon the denuded altars ; and the symbolism of the scourging of our Lord's body, and the crowning with thorns, suggested by John Myrc, was not too unnatural or extravagant. At each altar a responsory was sung, with the versicle and prayer of the saint to whom it was dedicated, and the altar was kissed by the ministers before they left it and proceeded to the next. The text of these responsories, printed in the old Sarum Missals, supplies a new confirmation of what was said above about the predominance of Judas' treachery in the liturgical conceptions of this day. I venture to quote the sixth and the tenth:

Judas, the wicked trafficker, kissed the Lord. He, as an innocent lamb, refused not the kiss of Judas: for a sum of money he betrayed Christ to the Jews.

Verse. Drunken with the poison of covetousness, while he thirsts after gain he comes to hanging.

Answer. For a sum of money he betrayed Christ to the Jews.

Or again:

The heavens will uncover the iniquity of Judas, and the earth will rise up against him, and his sins shall be manifest in the day of the Lord's anger, with them who said to the Lord God : Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.

Verse. He shall be reserved for the day of destruction, and at the day of vengeance he shall be led out.

Answer. With them who said to the Lord God: Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.

The altars remained bare until Saturday after Compline, and, indeed, more than a thousand years ago Amalarius of Metz explained: 'From Thursday until Holy Saturday the altars are nude, signifying the flight of the Apostles or the stripping of Christ.' [1]

The Maundy

After the stripping of the altars followed the Maundy, a rite which in this Protestant land has been shorn for us of much of the solemnity which it possessed in the days of our forefathers. To say the truth, it may claim to be looked upon as something more than a practice of devotion, seeing that a special service is provided for it in the Pontifical, and, what is still more noticeable, in the ordinary Missal or Mass-book, though the ceremony in question has no immediate connexion with the Mass. The name given to this function arose from the first word of the first antiphon sung during its performance: *Mandatum novum do vobis*, 'A new commandment I give unto you.'

[1] Hittorp, i. p. 332.

As for the nature of the ceremony itself, it will be sufficient to quote the rubric of the Missal:

After the unclothing of the altar, the clergy, at a convenient hour, meet to perform the *Maundy*. The prelate or superior comes to the place appointed in his alb, stole, and cope of a violet colour, accompanied by the deacon and subdeacon in white vestments. Then the Gospel, *Ante diem festum paschæ*, is sung by the deacon, with the usual ceremony of incense and lights. After the Gospel the prelate puts off his cope, and puts on a towel about him: and then on his knees and bareheaded he washes, wipes, and kisses the right foot of those that are chosen for the ceremony.

It would be easy to say a great deal about the ancient ceremony of the washing of feet, but inasmuch as it is not commonly witnessed by the faithful here in England, I refer to it only in so far as it helps to illustrate the Gospel of the day. In the Catholic Church from the very beginning, the faithful have understood literally the precept of their Master, 'If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also'; and all religious superiors, bishops and abbots and prelates, and the head of the Church himself, are wont to perform the Maundy on this day. For bishops, indeed, and the superiors of religious houses the execution of this counsel

of our Blessed Lord, where it can be fittingly carried out, may be said to be a matter of precept and part of the common law of the Church.[1] As early as the year 694 the seventeenth Synod of Toledo commanded all bishops and priests in positions of superiority under pain of excommunication, to wash the feet of those subject to them. In the monastic orders it was a common practice for the abbot to perform the ceremony twice over, washing first the feet of his monks, and then at another time the feet of a number of poor men. Similarly, in the latter half of the twelfth century, the Pope washed the feet of twelve subdeacons after his Mass, and of thirteen poor men after his dinner.[2] What was still more striking, the same counsel of our Blessed Lord was respected almost universally, even by secular princes. 'The kings of the gentiles lord it over them,' our Saviour had said; but it was always the tradition amongst the faithful sons of the Church Catholic to recognize, at least on this day of the year, that the King of kings had set an example of humility which it behoved them also to imitate. So, at least, it was in England before the change of religion, and the custom of

[1] The *Cæremoniale Episcoparum* (ii. 24) leaves the Bishop free to wash the feet either of thirteen poor men or thirteen of his canons, according to the custom of the particular church.

[2] This pious observance has not of course been neglected by modern Popes, but it is not now performed twice on the same day.

choosing a certain number of poor for this ceremony, according to the number of years of the king's age, was established in Catholic times. Even after the accession of Elizabeth, that princess continued the practice for a while; and in our own day the Maundy is nominally maintained though it now consists only in the distribution of alms to the poor without the actual washing of feet. At the Court of Spain, I believe, and in Austria the precept is still observed in its most literal acceptation; and a pleasing story used to be told of Queen Isabel II of Spain that on one occasion, having dropped a valuable bracelet into the basin in which she was washing the feet of one of the poor women, she would not have it returned to her, but told the good old body that it was part of her luck, and that she was to keep it for herself.

In the earliest times it seems to have been the custom to wash the feet of the catechumens who were to be baptized on Easter Eve. Both St. Augustine and St. Ambrose refer to the question, and the latter speaks so strongly in commendation of this work of humility as a means of grace, that he has been accused of regarding it in a strict sense as a sacrament. But while we cannot suppose that our Lord wished to raise this ceremony to the dignity of a sacrament, this much probably is true, that it was performed by Him, and is recalled in the Gospel of this day by the Church, with a clear symbolical reference to the

cleansing of the soul before Communion in the sacrament of Penance.

The mention of the washing of catechumens on Maundy Thursday which St. Augustine speaks of in his day, more as a physical than as a moral counsel, in order that they might be cleansed from the dust and dirt which it was part of the fasting discipline of the early Church to tolerate during Lent, reminds one of the old English name of the Thursday in Holy Week, *Shere Thursday*, of which something has been said in a previous chapter. This personal purification, as explained, was only a fitting act of respect in preparation for Easter. Perhaps the physical exhaustion it induced may be responsible for the long continuance of the practice of the *poculum charitatis*, a survival, it would seem, of the ancient Christian *Agape*, or love-feast. This cup of wine drunk on Maundy Thursday in token of charity is spoken of in most of the mediæval English and French uses, and, strange to say, it is also described in considerable detail in the early printed editions of the *Pontificale Romanum*. A special mazer bowl was often reserved for this occasion, of which mention is occasionally made in inventories and similar documents. Thus among the other plate kept in the 'Frater House,' we may read in the *Durham Rites* of a 'goodly great mazer called JUDAS-CUP, edged about with silver and double gilt, with a foot underneath it to stand on, of silver and double gilt, which was never used but

at Maundy Thursday at night in the Frater House, where the Prior and the whole convent did meet and keep their Maundy.'[1]

The Reconciliation of Penitents

The Reconciliation of the Penitents which formerly took place upon Maundy Thursday has

THE RECONCILIATION OF THE PENITENTS.
(*From the 'Giunta Pontifical' of* 1520.)

now so completely fallen into desuetude that it need not detain us long. Nevertheless, the Order for this ceremony still finds a place in the *Pontificale Romanum*, and the penitential discipline of the Church, as we have already seen, is too closely bound up with the history of Lent and

[1] *The Rites of Durham* (Surtees Society), p. 68.

Holy Week to be entirely passed over in this place. Although the rite as it now appears in the Pontifical is rather confused and redundant, the central conception is simple enough. Just as the penitents on Ash Wednesday were led out of the church by the Bishop and the doors shut against them, while they were solemnly admonished to do penance and to reflect upon the exclusion of Adam and Eve from Paradise in punishment of their disobedience, so on Maundy Thursday this ceremony was reversed, the penitents being led back into the church and absolution pronounced over them, with many consoling allusions to the resurrection from the dead and the inexhaustible mercy of our Saviour. At the beginning of the service, the penitents, barefoot, unshaven, unwashed, and clad in sackcloth, prostrated themselves outside the church door or in the porch, while the Penitential Psalms and the Litany of the Saints were recited by the clergy within. Thrice during the Litany the Bishop deputed some of his attendants to encourage the supplicants with the hope of pardon. The first time two subdeacons brought to them the greeting: 'As I live, saith the Lord, I will not the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live.' The second time two other subdeacons were sent with the message: 'Thus saith the Lord: do penance; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Finally, a deacon was commissioned to light their candles and to tell them: 'Lift

up your heads; lo! your redemption is nigh.'[1]

The Bishop then seated himself in the nave facing the penitents, while the Archdeacon, in a long form of address, interceded on their behalf. Upon this the Bishop advances to the church door, and after sundry preliminaries the Archpriest also pleads for the offenders, and, as in the case of candidates for ordination, he makes himself responsible for their suitable dispositions. The Bishop asks him, 'Knowest thou if they be worthy of reconciliation?' and the Archpriest replies: 'I know and bear witness that they are worthy.' Thereupon the Bishop takes one of them by the hand, this man leads his neighbour and so, forming a chain, the whole band of penitents is conducted by the Bishop to his faldstool in the centre of the nave, where he chants a solemn preface, grouping together some of the most striking examples of the Divine clemency in the Old and New Testaments. This is followed by a long series of prayers, and eventually by absolution, given not in a direct but in a deprecatory form; i.e. the Bishop does not say, 'I absolve you'; but 'May our Lord Jesus Christ, who vouchsafed to take away the sins of the whole world by delivering Himself up for us, and who also said to His disciples, "Whatsoever ye shall

[1] It is noteworthy that, as we learn from Alcuin, the candles of the candidates for Baptism on Easter Eve were lighted at the same point in the Litany.

bind," etc. . . . deign, by the intercession of Mary, Mother of God . . . to absolve you from all that ye have neglectfully done in thought, word or action, etc.'

The penitents were then sprinkled with holy water, incensed, and in some rituals touched with the foot of the Bishop's crozier, while the ceremony ended with the episcopal blessing in its most elaborate form and a concession of indulgence.

On the antiquity of this service of reconciliation there is no need to insist. Several of the prayers which yet stand in the Pontifical are to be found in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* and probably represent a ritual older than the time of St. Gregory the Great. I will only pause to call attention to a peculiarity which appears in the so-called Pontifical of Archbishop Egbert of York (732–766). This preserves a short form for the reconciliation of a penitent on Maundy Thursday, containing some prayers found alike in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* and in the modern Pontifical, but the absolution itself is given in the direct form, and, curiously enough, a translation of it in Anglo-Saxon has been written out in a hand of the tenth century and inserted in the volume opposite the Latin. In the Anglo-Saxon the prayer stands alone, in the Latin a short rubric is prefixed in this form:

Here thou raisest them from the ground (*pavi-*

mento), saying these words; and let the antiphon be sung:

Ant. I live, saith the Lord, I do not wish the death of sinners, but rather that he be converted and live.

Psalm. Miserere mei Deus.

Then comes the absolution, which I will borrow from the Anglo-Saxon version rather than from the Latin.

Beloved Brethren, we release (*onlisath*) you from the bonds of your sins, as representing Saint Peter, the chief of the Apostles, to whom our Lord gave the power to bind for sins and to loose again (*sỳnna to gebindeonne and eft to onlỳsenne*); and so far as (*ac swa miclum*) the accusation of your sins belongs to you and the forgiveness of them to us, so far be God Almighty life and preservation against all your sins, forgiven through Him, who with Him liveth and reigneth through worlds and worlds. Amen.[1]

The use of this form in so early a document shows clearly that no difficulty was felt in claiming jurisdiction to pronounce forgiveness; moreover, the fact that this item in the ceremony is alone selected for translation seems to indicate a sense of the pre-eminent importance of this portion of the ritual. Seeing that Dr. Schmitz's researches have established the existence of a form of private penance and absolution on

1 *Egbert's Pontifical* (Surtees Society), Preface.

Maundy Thursday side by side with the public discipline, and that this very absolution was used for the purpose, I am inclined to think from the wording of the Egbert Pontifical that the Anglo-Saxon version was intended for use in private cases. It is difficult to imagine that the penitents condemned for public and notorious crimes should be so early addressed as ' beloved brethren ' (*brothor thaleofcstan*), seeing that no form of address exists in the Latin. Moreover, in the *Ordo ad recipiendam carenam* (Form for Lenten penance), in one of the service-books of Augsburg[1] we find this particular absolution used immediately after confession, before the penance is begun, and hence thrown into strong contrast with a second absolution and reception which was conferred after the penance was performed, presumably on Maundy Thursday.

I will only notice finally that to the blessing and indulgence given after the reconciliation of the penitents we may probably trace the solemn Papal benediction, commonly if mistakenly known as the blessing *Urbi et Orbi*, given by the Pope in the piazza of St. Peter's on this day. Maundy Thursday was originally the only day on which it was pronounced, and the blessing on Easter Sunday appears to be simply a later imitation.

[1] The MS. itself (Munich cod. lat. 4118) is of late date, belonging to the fourteenth century, but the contents seem to show traces of a much older discipline: though the redaction cannot be very ancient, as we find mention of the *presbiter parochiarius*. Hoeynck, *Liturgie des Bisthums Augsburg*, p. 415.

The Blessing of the Holy Oils

When carried out under favourable conditions, such as, for instance, we may expect to find in the splendid sanctuary of the new Westminster Cathedral, the blessing of the Holy Oils must be regarded from some points of view as perhaps the most imposing ceremonial in the ritual of the Church. Twelve priests, seven deacons and seven subdeacons, all fully vested, form the retinue, grouped round their Bishop for the solemn function of this day. The thoughts of those who are in any way familiar with the Church's early liturgy can hardly fail to travel back to the Lateran Basilica of the fifth and sixth centuries, when Mass was celebrated by the Pope at the 'hollow altar,'[1] while the deacons and subdeacons of the seven ecclesiastical regions busied themselves in carrying to and fro the *ampullæ* of oil, and the priests, repeating the prayer of the Pontiff himself, blessed for private use the contents of the vessels brought by the faithful[2] which stood upon the balustrade (*podium*) of the sanctuary. Ever since the time of St. Leo at the beginning of the fifth century it seems clear that the blessing of the sacred chrism has been reserved to the Bishop and identified with this particular feast of Maundy Thursday

1 See the *Pontifical of Egbert*, and the tenth of the *Ordines Romani* (Migne, *P.L.* 78, 1011).

2 See Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, pp. 305–7.

The blessing of the oil of the sick, however, was probably at one time permitted to simple priests, especially in cases of emergency. In the Ambrosian ritual the evidence shows, that down to the tenth or eleventh century no prohibition existed to restrain them from doing so.[1] Moreover, the fact that the *oleum infirmorum* (oil of the sick), is even now blessed with much ceremony apart from the other two oils and at a different place in the liturgy, suggests that the rite is of somewhat more recent introduction. I might add that an obvious reason exists for the blessing of the chrism and the oil of catechumens on the Thursday, because they were needed, and that in considerable quantity, for the baptisms on Easter eve; whereas no such reason can be quoted for connecting the oil of the sick with Holy Week in particular. But while there seems in this way ground for thinking that in the beginning of things this *oleum infirmorum* was not commonly blessed with the other two, it is practically certain that the change took place very early, and that for more than thirteen hundred years a solemn function has been held on this day in the cathedral church of every diocese, a function substantially identical with that which we witness now.

The names and the distinctive use of the three holy oils, are probably familiar enough to my

[1] See Magistretti, *Monumenta Veteris Liturgiæ Ambrosianæ*, i. pp. 95–6. He quotes in particular Bonizo (A.D. 1089), who refers to the change of usage (Migne, *P.L.*, 150, 85).

readers at the present day, but I may quote a few words, written by the Anglo-Saxon abbot Ælfric in the vulgar tongue, to show how this instruction was concisely conveyed to the unlearned clergy in the tenth century:

O ye mass priests, my brothers, we will now say to you what we have not before said, because to-day we were to divide (i.e. distribute) our oil, hallowed in three ways, as the book points out to us; i.e. *oleum sanctum, et oleum chrismatis et oleum infirmorum*, that is, in English, holy oil, the second is chrism, the third sick men's oil: and ye ought to have three flasks ready for the three oils, for we dare not put them together in one oil-vessel, because each of them is hallowed apart for a particular service. With the holy oil (i.e., the oil of catechumens) ye shall mark heathen children on the breast, and betwixt the shoulders, in the middle, with the sign of the cross before ye baptize it in the font water; and when it comes from the water, ye shall make the sign of the cross on the head with the holy chrism. Into the holy font before ye baptize them ye shall pour chrism in the figure of Christ's cross, and no one may be sprinkled with the font water after the chrism is poured in.

With sick men's oil ye shall anoint the sick, as James the Apostle taught in his Epistle: *ut allevet eos Dominus, et si in peccatis sint dimittentur eis*, that the Lord may raise them up from their sickness, and if they are in sins that they shall be forgiven them.[1]

1 Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes*, p. 464.

Ælfric's instruction was concerned only with the use which priests had to make of the holy oils. Hence he says nothing of the use of chrism in confirmation, or in the consecration of bishops, churches, bells, chalices, etc.; and similarly he had no occasion to tell how the oil of catechumens was employed in the ordination of priests and some other episcopal functions.

As regards the manner of blessing the oils, if we turn to the *Pontificale Romanum*, we find a rite now in use which, elaborate as it seems, is in several respects less diffuse and redundant than that employed in England during the Middle Ages. In their more essential features the rites agree, but they differ in the prayers and in sundry minor details. The attendance of a considerable number of priests with seven deacons and seven subdeacons, was prescribed,[1] and in every case much greater solemnity was given to the blessing of the chrism, while the *oleum infirmorum* was consecrated apart from the other two holy oils. According to the form both now and formerly in use, the blessing of the oil of the sick comes first. The Bishop interrupts the canon of the Mass after the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* and immediately before the words *Per quem hæc omnia*. He purifies his fingers, leaves the altar and, supported by his retinue of priests, deacons and subdeacons, goes to a table apart

[1] Some of the Pontificals, however, say *five*. See the appendix to Bishop Bainbridge's Pontifical (Surtees Society), p. 252.

prepared for the blessing of the oils. Thither one of the subdeacons, without any great ceremony, brings the vessel of oil intended for the *oleum infirmorum* and the bishop in a voice audible only to those standing around, reads a form of exorcism and then of blessing, praying that this fatness of the olive may have virtue to heal all infirmities of mind and body; after which the oil is quietly carried back to the sacristy and the Bishop returning to the altar continues the Mass.

The consecration of the other two oils involves a much more imposing ceremony. It takes place after the Bishop and the assisting clergy have communicated and the ablutions have been received. The Bishop, as before, leaves the altar and seats himself at the table; but this time incense is blessed and the priests, deacons and subdeacons, with others of the inferior clergy, go in procession to the sacristy and bring back the two remaining vessels of oil, with the balsam needed for making chrism. On the way back a hymn is sung, *O Redemptor, sume carmen*, which is certainly of very ancient date, although there is no ground for assigning it, as is done by Dom Guéranger on the authority of a twelfth century manuscript, to Venantius Fortunatus, the contemporary of St. Gregory the Great. The words:

O Redemptor, sume carmen temet concinentium,

O Redeemer, hear, we pray, the song of those who sing with Thee,

are chanted as a refrain by all the procession, while the cantors intone such verses as these :

May the Holy Ghost be present,
Who when ceased the deluge rain
To the Ark, the Church's figure,
Brought the olive branch again.
O Redeemer, etc.

Fructified with light, this olive
Now presents for consecration,
What our lowly band adoring
Brings to Thee, the world's Salvation.
O Redeemer, etc.

Duly mitred at the altar
Suppliant the pontiff stands,
Rightly ordering the chrism
With his consecrating hands.[1]
O Redeemer, etc.

Thou this oil vouchsafe to hallow,
King of the eternal land ;
Sign of living power to vanquish
Satan and his demon band.
O Redeemer, etc.

The Bishop stands behind the table but facing the altar ; the twelve priests range themselves

[1] In some of the old English uses, e.g. that of Exeter, in which this hymn was sung, the rubric here directs that the Bishop is to rise to his feet and stand beside the altar when this verse is heard. (*Stans ad aram, immo supplex, Infulatus pontifex,* 62.)

on either side, 'as though,' says the rubric, 'they were his witnesses, and fellow-workers in this service of the sacred chrism.' The deacons and subdeacons are drawn up behind, while the vessel of oil for the chrism, and the balsam are placed on the table before the Bishop. The balsam is blessed first, and then mingled with a small quantity of the oil. After this the Bishop breathes thrice in the form of a cross, over the orifice of the vessel of oil, and each of the twelve attendant priests comes forward and breathes in like manner. Then follows an exorcism of 'the creature of oil,' which terminates with a *per omnia sæcula sæculorum* sung in the tone of the Preface, introducing in fact a long consecratory Preface, which is the climax of this benediction. This Preface is most ancient. It appears in the *Gelasian* and *Gregorian Sacramentaries* and in nearly all mediæval uses, beginning thus :

It is truly meet and just, right and profitable to salvation that we should always and in all places give thanks unto Thee, Holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God, who in the beginning among other blessings of Thy bounty didst command the earth to bring forth trees yielding fruit, and that among these the olive should spring up, bearing this rich liquor, the fruit whereof should minister unto the holy Chrism. For David also, foreknowing in the spirit of prophecy the Sacrament of Thy grace, sang that our faces were to be made glad with oil; and when of old the sins

of the world were washed away by the outpouring of a deluge, the dove, the type of the gift to come, by an olive branch brought tidings that peace was restored to the earth—the which has been made manifest in these latter ages, for when the waters of Baptism do wash away the sins of man, the anointing of oil maketh our countenances cheerful and calm.

The Preface then goes on to commemorate the anointing of Aaron and the descent of the Holy Spirit at the moment of our Lord's baptism, and finally concludes in these terms :

We therefore pray thee, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to sanctify ✠ with Thy blessing ✠ this creature of oil, and to infuse into it the virtue of Thy Holy ✠ Spirit, with the power of Christ thy Son co-operating, from whose holy name it has received the name of Chrism, with which Thou hast anointed thy kings, priests, and martyrs ; that to all who shall be renewed in the spiritual laver of baptism Thou wouldst confirm this Chrism for a sacrament of perfect health and life, that by the infusion of sanctifying grace, and the destruction of our original corruption, each one as a holy temple may breathe the fragrance of a holy and acceptable life ; that according to the sacrament of Thy institution, being anointed to the dignity of kings and priests and prophets, they may be clad with the robe of the undying gift, that it may be to all who shall be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, the Chrism of salvation, and may make them

partakers of eternal life and heirs together of celestial glory.

The Preface ends with the words: 'through the same Lord Jesus Christ, etc.,' spoken in a low tone without any chant. Thereupon the balsam already prepared is poured into the blessed oil with a brief prayer, and finally the Bishop salutes the sacred Chrism three times with the words *Ave sanctum Chrisma*, each time raising his voice, and after the third salutation he kisses the lip of the vessel containing it. This is imitated by each of the twelve assisting priests, who, however, in making each salutation of *Ave sanctum Chrisma* genuflect to the Chrism, whereas the Bishop only bows his head.

It is to this scene that Canon Oakeley specially alludes in his *Lyra Liturgica*, under the heading Holy Thursday:

Our Lord is prodigal of gifts to-day,
His mercies with His steps harmonious move;
Or, if He pause, He pauses to display
New signs of power, new miracles of love.

Twice, ere the Rite of rites be yet complete,
Lo, where the mitred celebrant descends,
To bless with holy words and actions meet
The oil of gladness to its destined ends!

And while each white-robed priest in order pays
Glad homage to the source of health divine,
Our grateful hearts shall echo forth the praise
And in the Church's world-wide *Ave* join.

After the triple *Ave* of salutation the vessel of Chrism is kissed by each of the priests. This practice was also observed in our English mediæval uses, but with a curious modification resulting from the different position which the consecration of the Chrism occupied in the Mass. In our present rites, as already explained, the Communion and ablutions have both been completed, and only the Post-communion remains to be said ; but in England, formerly, the second blessing of the oils occurred immediately after the embolismus of the *Pater noster*, i.e. immediately before the *Per omnia*, which introduces the *Pax Domini ;* moreover the blessing of the oil of catechumens preceded that of the Chrism. From this peculiarity the curious practice resulted of carrying round the *ampulla* of Chrism after the *Agnus Dei*, to be kissed, the Bishop himself having kissed it first, in place of the ordinary *pax*.[1]

The blessing of the oil of catechumens, which in the present Roman rite follows that of the Chrism, needs no long description. There is first an exorcism, and then a prayer of blessing begging that the use of this oil may procure absolution of mind and body, ' so that there be no place for spiritual wickedness, no occasion given to relapsing virtue, no power of concealment left to

[1] In this way it will be seen that the Pax was not exactly omitted, though it was not given in the ordinary way from one to another, laying cheek against cheek, as in the kiss of Judas.

lurking sins.' Other words are added showing that the oil is intended to be used before the actual reception of baptism. In this case no Preface is sung, but the triple salutation of the holy oil, with the kissing of the *ampulla*, is prescribed as in the case of the Chrism. When this is over, both vessels are taken back to the sacristy, escorted by priests, deacons and subdeacons, as before, who sing the remaining stanzas of the *O Redemptor.*

Sin, from souls, that in the font are
Hallowèd, doth flee apace;
Brows by holy oil anointed,
Gifts adorn of special grace.
O Redeemer, etc.

Let this be a feast-day to us
Through the ages evermore,
With meet praises consecrated,
Nor wax old till time be o'er.[1]
O Redeemer, etc.

[1] I have borrowed from the translation found in an English edition of the Sarum Missal published some thirty years ago.

CHAPTER VIII

Good Friday

WHATEVER may be thought of the disparity of the elements of which the morning office for Good Friday is sometimes said to be made up, there can, I think, be little doubt not only that it contains many features of extreme antiquity, but also that a service substantially identical with that now familiar to us was celebrated in the 'titular' or parish churches in Rome at the end of the eighth century. There is perhaps a tendency to direct attention too exclusively to the pontifical functions at the Lateran or other basilicas. In some instances—the rite of the paschal candle seems to be a case in point [1]—the parish churches of Rome appear to have led the way in the matter of liturgical development. However this may be, I think it is clear from the St. Amand *Ordo Romanus* [2] that in the eighth century the presbyters of Rome, after assembling at the

[1] See an article on the *Exsultet and the Paschal Candle* in *The Month* for April, 1896, and further on the Chapter on Holy Saturday.

[2] Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 468.

basilica of the Holy Cross before midday, and taking part there in a service corresponding to the first portion of what now appears in our Missals, returned afterwards to their own titular churches, and in the afternoon, besides *repeating* all the ceremonies in which they had taken part, added to them the veneration of the Cross, together with the Communion service which we are accustomed to call the Mass of the Presanctified.[1] On this point the *Ordo* I have just referred to speaks quite clearly and precisely: 'Then [i.e. after the chanting of the Passion and solemn prayers] the priests return to their titular churches, and at the ninth hour (3 p.m.) they also do likewise both as regards the lessons and the responses, and the Gospel, and the solemn prayers. After which they adore the Holy Cross and all receive Communion.' It would hardly be possible to give in a few words a more exact account of the service which we now celebrate. Moreover, while we may thus trace back to the eighth century the morning office of Good Friday as a whole, it is also true that several of the individual elements belong to the very earliest ages of Christianity. If we want to know in what manner our fathers in the faith worshipped God during the first four centuries, we must go to church on Good Friday

[1] On this point see an interesting series of articles in *Der Katholik*, February to April 1901, 'Ueber Ursprung, Alter und Entwickelung der Missa Præsanctificatorum,' by Pfarrer Raible.

morning. No doubt there have been many additions and many contractions in other directions, but there is much of the old ritual still left, and by comparing it with the information which we glean from contemporary writers we are able to form a satisfactory idea of what the old order of things was like.

The Service of Three Lessons

There are few scenes liturgically more impressive than the appearance of the church at the beginning of the service on Good Friday morning. The bare floor, the dismantled altar, the veiled crucifix, the unlighted candles, and then, when the little procession of the sacred ministers in their black vestments has silently made its way to the sanctuary, the sudden prostration upon the altar-steps, where they seem to annihilate themselves in the very extremity of self-abandonment—all these are things that can hardly fail to produce an effect upon the most indifferent spectator. Canon Oakeley seems to have caught the spirit of the scene very faithfully in his verses on Good Friday :

Thy heart, O widow'd Spouse, is like to break ;
Thou canst not speak ;
Thou canst but hide thy face and sob and weep,
In anguish deep,

And ask to know, as Angels only know,
Thy master-woe.[1]

One is conscious of a certain feeling of irreverence in turning away from the profound religious emotions awakened in us by the occasion and its surroundings, in order to discuss historical details of ceremonial which in some sense make not for edification. However, as it is not intended that these chapters should take the place of a manual of devotions, or of the Holy Week book itself, so I would urge on the other hand that familiarity with the material part of the ritual, and above all, the sense that the ceremonial at which we are assisting has come to us unchanged from the days of the early Fathers and has been sanctified by the participation of unnumbered generations of Christians, believing as we believe and struggling as we struggle, will deepen rather than efface the impressions we wish to cherish. So let us turn to the more notable features of the Good Friday service and say what there is to be said about each in order.

The prostration which at the silent entrance of the procession impresses us so powerfully is not absolutely unknown at other times. During the litany which is sung on Holy Saturday and on such a special occasion as an Ordination Mass, the sacred ministers or the candidates to be

[1] Oakeley, *Lyra Liturgica.*

ordained fall upon their faces before the altar in the same way. But the Good Friday prostration probably recalls an act of humiliation which was as habitually practised in the early Church

PROSTRATION AT THE BEGINNING OF MASS.
(*From Robault de Fleury, 'La Messe.'*)

as the genuflexion is with us, every time that the chief Pontiff and his attendants made their solemn entry into the sanctuary for High Mass. It may be interesting to summarize from the oldest Roman *Ordines* the incidents of such a

solemn entry. The period to which these details belong is the ninth century after Christ.

In the sacristy near the entrance of the Lateran Basilica the Pontiff assumed the sacred vestments. There he took his place in the procession to the altar, being supported on his right by his archdeacon and on his left by the second deacon and preceded by the subdeacons, one of whom, who was inferior in grade to the seven regionary[1] subdeacons, swung a smoking censer. At the head of the procession walked the seven regionary acolytes bearing lighted candles. During the time the *schola* or body of choristers performed the Introit, repeating the antiphon after each verse of the psalm, and singing the *Gloria Patri* only when the Pontiff reached the altar. On entering the sanctuary the Pope gave the kiss of peace to one of the seven cardinal bishops attached to the Lateran, to the senior of the priests and to all the deacons. Then he prostrated himself before the altar upon a cushion, while the deacons walked up two by two to kiss the altar at the sides. Coming back to the Pontiff, they helped him to rise, and he on ascending to the altar kissed it in his turn, as well as the text of the Gospels which had been placed there

[1] Pope St. Fabian in the third century divided Rome into seven ecclesiastical 'regions.' Each region had a deacon and subdeacon of its own with acolytes under them. These clerics were called 'regionaries'; others of the same grade were called *sequentes*, supernumeraries.

beforehand. He then returned to the throne, where he stood up facing the east.[1]

Now the interest of these details is considerable, especially to those who are at all familiar with the ceremonies of a modern Pontifical High Mass. The Introit, it will be noticed, was then an antiphonized psalm which was sung by the choir as the procession moved along, and which was terminated by the *Gloria* as soon as the ministers reached the altar. In our modern Missal we have kept the antiphon at the beginning and at the end, with the *Gloria Patri*, but the psalm itself has been curtailed to its first verse only. Again the seven candles of the acolytes, which were eventually ranged in a row on or before the altar, explain in the clearest way the origin of the seven candles in a Pontifical High Mass, and, through an obvious differentiation, the origin of the six candles on the altar in a High Mass which is not pontifical. I have said nothing of the *capsa*, or pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament which was brought to the Pontiff to be venerated on his way to the altar, and in which we may probably trace the germ of the visit to the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, which is always so carefully provided for in our present pontifical ceremonial. What chiefly interests us here is the prostration. The Einsiedeln *Ordo*, speaking of this day, says

[1] Dom G. Morin in the *Revue Bénédictine*, vol. vi. p. 408. Cf. Probst, *Die ältesten Römischen Sacramentarien*, p. 204.

expressly that the Pope on entering the Sessorian basilica *prosternit se ad orationem*, 'prostrates himself for prayer,' before he goes up to kiss the altar.[1] In the other *Ordines*, which are concerned with the High Mass in general, if their language is less explicit about the prostration, still they tell us that the Pontiff *surgit ab oratione*, 'rises from prayer,' a phrase which presupposes at least that very profound inclination now seen only in certain monastic orders and the oriental liturgies. Whatever was the precise nature of the prostration or inclination, it was not a mere bow but a protracted act of reverence, and it would seem that the Good Friday service alone has retained unchanged a feature which eleven hundred years ago was witnessed at the beginning of every Mass. What has practically replaced it in our modern ceremonial is the *Confiteor*, the private prayer of humiliation, in which the celebrant and his assistants mutually abase themselves at the foot of God's holy altar. The arrangement in a grand pontifical function, when the sacred ministers split up into little groups, and make their confessions not to the celebrant but to one another, still indicates that the *Confiteor* was not originally designed as part of the liturgy, but originated only in the private devotion of those who wished to occupy profitably the

[1] De Rossi, *Inscriptiones Christianæ*, vol. ii. p. 34. Cf. Grisar, in the *Innsbrücker Zeitschrift*, 1886.

time that was spent in a posture of adoration, while the choir were repeating the antiphon of the Introit.

It also seems probable that the work of the acolytes in preparing the altar and spreading the cloth upon it, which is now performed at this place, likewise represents the primitive arrangement. In the private Masses of the ninth and tenth centuries and in some places even down to the end of the last century the altar remained bare until the priest who was to say Mass actually arrived at the spot. He himself brought a little crucifix or cross, along with the chalice, and the server carried a candlestick and candle. There is no trace before this period of candlesticks remaining permanently upon the altar; and in all probability, as already suggested above, the six candlesticks we now see there, or seven when a bishop pontificates, have sprung from the seven candles originally borne before the Roman Pontiff by the seven regionary acolytes.

The priest then recites at the Epistle corner the three lessons, which are the next conspicuous feature of the Good Friday ceremonies. I call them three lessons, though one of them consists of the whole Passion according to St. John; but the analogy of other ancient rites in the West strongly suggests that three such lessons separated by Gradual or Tract constitute a very early type of service. One, as in the case before us, was taken from the Old Testament, the second from

the Epistles and the third from the Gospels. We find this arrangement in the Spanish, Ambrosian and Gallican liturgies, though in Rome it only appears by exception.[1] It is the view of Mgr. Duchesne, who speaks with authority on such subjects, that in the first centuries the synaxes, or assemblies of the faithful, throughout the week were 'aliturgical,' i.e. not accompanied by the celebration of Mass. On these occasions, as he contends, the service took a form of which the earliest portion of the Good Friday celebration preserves a sufficiently exact type. The chief feature of these assemblies was the three lessons with the *psalmi responsorii* or *tracti*, which separated them, but they were followed by solemn prayers for all the needs of the Church, and everything goes to show that these latter must be regarded as of the very highest antiquity. Good Friday is now the only day in the year which preserves the traces of such a service, but if Duchesne's view is to be accepted, it was formerly held in Rome on the Wednesday and Friday, the stational fasting days of every week. With regard to the actual lessons read, it is interesting to trace in the most primitive *Ordines* of the eighth century the same passage from the prophet Osee, and the same extract from Exodus, both so rich in prophetical allusion to the sacrifice

1 See Ceriani, *Notitia Liturgiæ Ambrosianæ*, p. 3; and Magistretti, *Cenni sul Rito Ambrosiano*, pp. 27–28.

of the Cross, which we hear in our churches to-day. It is prescribed that the passage from Osee should be read by a *lector*, almost the only occasion in which our present Missal speaks of employing the services of a cleric of this order.

With regard to the chanting of the Passion little need be added to what has been said in chapter v. The absence of light and incense and the omission of the response *Deo gratias* after the announcement are insisted upon from the very earliest times. It is curious that in the monasteries of the West there was an ancient custom that two ministers should stealthily approach the altar at the words in the Gospel, *Partiti sunt vestimenta mea*, and should carry off the altar cloth. The 'lenten curtain' which in mediæval times separated the congregation from the sanctuary during this season had already been done away with at the words, 'The veil of the Temple was rent asunder,' in the Passion on the previous Wednesday.[1] That the Wednesday was selected seems simply to have been due to the fact that on Sundays the curtain was drawn back as of right. This would have prevented the rending of the veil from being enacted on Palm Sunday itself, although this as the first of the days on which the Passion was read would have seemed the most natural day for the purpose.

[1] I have spoken in an earlier note (see above p. 232) of the impressive ceremony which still takes place in the cathedral of Seville at the rending of the lenten curtain.

It will be interesting to note here the account which Martène gives of the singing of the Passion on Good Friday, according to an ancient Ritual of the Church of Soissons. 'The Archdeacon is conducted to the lectern in the following order. A cleric goes in front barefoot and carrying the thurible with incense; then follows the subdeacon wearing his chasuble and carrying the cushion; last comes the archdeacon, holding in his hands the book of the Gospels covered with a veil of red silk, and wearing over his shoulder the chasuble rolled up in the fashion of a stole. After the reading of the Gospel, the subdeacon takes the book, hides it away under his vestment, and secretly conveys it to the sepulchre, while the cleric goes before him with the incense. The book having been deposited upon the altar of the sepulchre, both return to the sanctuary.'

The practice of pausing in the recitation of the Passion, after the words *expiravit* or *emisit spiritum*, in order that all present may kneel down and meditate upon the death of our Saviour, though now prescribed by the rubric of the Roman Missal, is not of very ancient date. It seems to have originated in the local custom of some of the Benedictine monasteries in France. There, as the chronicler, Geoffrey of Beaulieu, informs us, it attracted the attention of S[t] Louis, King of France, who was deeply impressed by it, and who in the earnestness of his devotion 'caused it to be observed in his own royal chapel

and in several other churches. And from this it came to pass that at his request this pious usage was approved and established by the Order of Friars Preachers.'[1] We can trace the spread of the practice in the decrees of various synods on French territory and in the general chapters of religious orders, and about a hundred years afterwards, at the end of the fourteenth century, we find that Rome had also adopted it, whence it has become a law throughout all western Christendom.[2]

The Solemn Prayers

It is agreed on all hands that there is no portion of the Church's liturgy which bears more clearly stamped upon it the evidence of remote antiquity than the prayers which follow immediately upon the chanting of the Passion. I may quote from the Holy Week book the first of the series as an illustration of the rest. First of all the celebrant from the Epistle corner of the altar intones aloud in a chant fully noted in the Missal the following *Monitio :*

OREMUS dilectissimi nobis, pro ecclesia sancta Dei : ut eam Deus et Dominus noster paci-

LET us pray, beloved brethren, for the holy Church of God : that our God and Lord

[1] *Vita St. Ludovici*, c. 36.
[2] *Revue Bénédictine*, vol. iii. p. 67.

ficare, adunare, custodire dignetur toto orbe terrarum : subjiciens ei principatus, et potestates : detque nobis quietam et tranquillam vitam degentibus, glorificare Deum patrem omnipotentem.

would be pleased to give it peace, maintain it in union, and preserve it over the earth : subjecting to it the princes and potentates of the world : and grant us who live in peace and tranquillity, grace to glorify God the Father Almighty.

Thereupon the priest, somewhat changing his tone, sings :

Oremus. Let us pray.

Then the deacon calls upon the congregation with the words :

Flectamus genua. Let us bend our knees.

To which the subdeacon replies :

Levate. Rise up.

And finally the priest sings the prayer corresponding to the intention which he has just announced, in a tone again musically noted in the Missal. In the instance before us the praver runs :

OMNIPOTENS sempiterne Deus, qui gloriam tuam omnibus in Christo gentibus revelasti: custodi opera miseri-

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who by Christ hast revealed Thy glory to all nations : preserve the works of Thy

cordiæ tuæ : ut ecclesia tua toto orbe diffusa, stabili fide in confessione tui nominis perseveret. Per eumdem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum. R. Amen.

mercy : that Thy Church, spread over all the world, may persevere with a constant faith in the confession of Thy name, through the same Lord Jesus Christ. R. Amen.

Then follow in order similar intercessions, offered for the Pope, for the ecclesiastical hierarchy, for the emperor or king, for the catechumens, for all sorts of necessities, for heretics and schismatics, for the Jews, and for pagans ; all of which are modelled upon the same plan except that in the prayer for the Jews the *Flectamus genua* and its response are omitted.

In order to make the character of these prayers more easily intelligible, it will be well to say a few words upon the distinction between three different manners of praying which we may recognize in the early Church. We may call them with Duchesne [1] the *litany*, the *eucharistic* prayer, and the *collective* prayer.

The litany was of this nature. One of the sacred ministers called aloud upon the assembly to pray for a certain number of different intentions which he enumerated in succession. After each intention he made a pause, and everybody present uttered a brief formula of supplication :

[1] *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, pp. 100. seq. ; *Christian Worship*, pp. 106, seq.

Kyrie eleison, or *Te rogamus audi nos*, etc. In the East this form of prayer still retains a prominent place in the liturgy of the Mass, and it is the duty of the deacon to announce the intentions to be prayed for in this way. In the West, on the other hand, this form of prayer has left but few traces in the ritual of the Holy Sacrifice.

Another form of prayer, and the most solemn of all, is that which we may call *eucharistic*, i.e. the prayer of benediction and thanksgiving. It is spoken by the celebrant in the name of the whole assembly. The congregation content themselves with joining in it mentally, and with answering *Amen* at the end. In the Roman liturgy it is best known to us from the Preface of the Mass, and it begins always in much the same way : *Vere dignum et justum est*, etc., " It is truly meet and just, right and wholesome, that we always and in all places give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, everlasting God," etc.

The third form of prayer is that which is brought before us so conspicuously in this portion of the Good Friday Service, the *collective* prayer, if it may so be called. Here the celebrant who presides over the assembly, himself invites the congregation to pray, indicating with more or less of development the intention for which they are to offer their petitions. When the subject of prayer has thus been proposed there is an interval of profound silence. If it be a season when the law of the Church permits kneeling,

the deacon may invite them to take that posture, otherwise they stand in the attitude of prayer, as the priest still stands during the greater part of the Mass, their arms raised and their hands outstretched (*expansis manibus*). Then after a certain space accorded for these silent communings with God, the priest's voice is heard again, and he gathers up or summarizes the prayer of the assembly in a concise formula, known to us as a Collect,[1] which he pronounces in the name of all. It will be seen that the Collects of the Mass are essentially prayers of this character. It is true that the invitation to pray has been cut down to the single word *Oremus* without any indication of the subject of the prayer ; it is true that the celebrant now proceeds immediately to "collect" the prayers even before there can be any prayers to be collected. Still one has only to glance at the fuller form which meets us here in these supplications of Good Friday to understand at once how our every-day practice has arisen. Even on Good Friday itself the interval for private and silent intercession has been completely eliminated. No sooner has the deacon proposed that we should kneel down than the subdeacon commands us

[1] It would not seem that the word *collect* is derived from this *collectio* or gathering up. The *collecta*, according to all the best authorities, is the assembly itself, and has come by a metonomy similar to that involved in our present use of the word *missa* to be transferred to the prayer.

to stand up again. None the less the monks of old thought that there might be something to be said in favour of this prompt recovery. The ancient cenobites of Egypt found that drowsiness was apt to steal upon them during a long prostration. So I think that I need no apology if I make a quotation or two from the *Institutes* of the venerable Abbot Cassian, a monk who wrote in the first years of the fifth century. His words throw a good deal of light upon this collective prayer which is so prominent a feature of the Good Friday service.

These aforesaid prayers, then, they begin and finish in such a way that when the psalm is ended they do not hurry at once to kneel down, as some of us do in this country, who before the psalm is fairly ended, make haste to prostrate themselves for prayer, in our hurry to finish the service as quickly as possible. . . . Among them, therefore, it is not so, but they pray upright, both before they pray on their knees, and afterwards also spend the greater part of the time standing up in the attitude of supplication. And so it is only for the briefest space of time that they prostrate themselves to the ground, as if but adoring the Divine Mercy, and as soon as possible rise up, and again standing erect with outspread hands—just as they had been standing to pray before—remain with thoughts intent upon their prayers.[1]

[1] It seems clear from this that standing with the arms outstretched was regarded as a more penitential posture than prostration.

For when you lie prostrate for any length of time upon the ground, you are more open to an attack, they say, not only of wandering thoughts but also of slumber. And would that we too did not know the truth of this by experience and daily practice—we who, when prostrating ourselves on the ground, too often wish for this attitude to be prolonged for some time, not for the sake of our prayer so much as for the sake of resting. But when he who is to collect the prayer rises from the ground, they all start up at once, so that no one would venture to bend the knee before *he* bows down, nor to delay when *he* has risen from the ground, lest it should be thought that he has offered his own prayer independently, instead of following the leader to the close.[1]

As to the stillness which rested upon the assembly after the subject of the prayer had been proposed to them, Cassian says a little further on :

When, then, they meet together to celebrate the aforementioned rites, which they term *synaxes*, they are all so perfectly silent that though so large a number of the brethren is assembled together, you would not think a single person were present except the one who stands up and chants the psalm in the midst ; and especially is this the case when the [private] prayer is being made, for then there is no spitting, no clearing of the throat, or noise of coughing, no sleepy yawnings with open mouth and gaping,

[1] Cassian's *Institutes*, II. vii., 'Of their Method of Praying.'

and no groans or sighs are uttered likely to distract those who are beside them. No voice is heard save that of the priest who sums up [*concludentis*] the prayer.

There is every reason to believe that these solemn prayers in our Good Friday service date back at least to the time of Cassian and St. Jerome. Very possibly they formed an almost invariable adjunct to the three lessons and the *psalmi responsorii*, of which, as was said above, the non-liturgical *synaxes* mainly consisted. In the middle ages I think that they still survived in our English churches in the prayers known as the 'bidding prayers,' and in France in the *prières du prône*.[1] But although they must thus have been an almost daily feature in the life of the Christians of the fourth century, it is only on this one occasion in the whole year that they are heard in our churches now. Probably the apparently meaningless *Oremus*, which is said in the Mass before the antiphon called the Offertory, marks the place where once they stood.

The Adoration of the Cross

After the solemn prayers the next feature which meets us in the morning office of Good

[1] The most curious resemblances may be traced between details of these prayers and those found in the Ambrosian, Greek and Celtic liturgies. See the tabular arrangement in Magistretti, *La Liturgia della Chiese Milanese nel secola* IV, pp. 190–191. Cf. also Bäumer, *Geschichte des Breviers*, pp. 610–611.

Friday is the rite which in the Latin books is described as *adoratio crucis*, but which amongst our English forefathers was known as the 'creeping to the cross.' There is not, I think, any sufficient reason for dwelling upon the preliminary ceremonies with which that most impressive function is introduced. I content myself with reproducing the rubrics in the Holy Week book, which sufficiently explain the details of what is done.

After reading the foregoing prayers the priest puts off his chasuble, and taking down the cross, covered with a veil, from the altar, he goes with the deacon and subdeacon to the Epistle corner of the altar, where he uncovers the top of it, and shows it to the people, singing with the deacon and subdeacon the following Anthem :

Ant. Ecce lignum crucis, in quo salus mundi pependit.

Ant. Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world.

To which the choir, prostrate on the ground, answer :

Venite, adoremus. Come, let us adore.

From thence the priest proceeds again to the Epistle corner, where he uncovers the right arm of the cross, singing a second time, in a higher key, Ecce lignum, etc., *as before. Lastly, he goes to the middle of the altar, and uncovers the whole cross, singing a third time, still*

higher, Ecce lignum, etc. *After which he carries it to a place prepared before the altar, where himself first kisses it, and then all the clergy and laity, two and two, kneeling thrice on both knees, and kissing the feet of the crucifix.*

During this ceremony two chanters in the middle of the choir sing the following verses, wherein the Redeemer of the world is represented as reproaching the Jews for their ingratitude.

POPULE meus quid feci tibi? aut in quo contristavi te? Responde mihi.

V. Quia eduxi te de terra Ægypti: parasti crucem Salvatori tuo.

MY people, what have I done to thee? or in what have I grieved thee? Answer Me.

V. Because I brought thee out of the land of Egypt: thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour.

As we may learn from liturgical writers like Alcuin, Amalarius and St. Æthelwold, there has been, no doubt, a certain amount of variation in the antiphons sung, and in their order, but we may say that the rite, as we have it now, is very much the same as it was in this country more than a thousand years ago. I will turn therefore by preference rather to the first beginnings of this 'adoration' of the cross, which, as Amalarius and other early writers correctly divine, originated in the veneration paid to the relic of the true Cross discovered by St. Helena, the

mother of the Emperor Constantine. Of this relic St. Cyril of Jerusalem tells us, writing within twenty-five years of the time of its discovery, 'that it has been distributed fragment by fragment from this spot, and has already nearly filled the whole world.' From the custom of venerating the wood of the true Cross itself, in those places which were fortunate enough to possess a frag-

VENERATION OF THE CROSS ON GOOD FRIDAY IN THE GREEK CHURCH. (*From Kraus, 'Realencyclopädie.'*)

ment, the practice arose in time of paying homage to any rough representation of the instrument of our Lord's death. As Amalarius very sensibly remarks, 'Although every church cannot have such a relic, still the virtue of the holy true Cross

is not wanting in those crosses which are made in representation of it.' We will turn therefore to the pilgrim lady who has before been quoted in the chapter on Palm Sunday, and we will try to learn from her how the Christians of Jerusalem about the year 380 kept Good Friday, and more especially how they venerated the Holy Cross still preserved in their midst.

She had already described in detail the solemnities of the Thursday evening. There had been Mass just before sunset, which on that day alone of all the year was said *ad crucem*, beside the Cross, and there all the faithful had communicated. Then after a hasty meal they had streamed across the valley, and all that night they had watched on the Mount of Olives, moving from one hallowed spot to another, following every stage of the Passion with prayers and lessons from the Scriptures, reading aloud the very words which the Saviour had spoken there on that April evening three centuries and a half before. Then when it was past midnight they turned to go down. All of them, says Egeria, accompanied the Bishop, even to the youngest child. 'So great was the crowd, and so steep the road, and so weary were they with their watchings and al the fasts of Lent, that the descent was made slowly and slowly' (*lente et lente*), though two hundred torches were burning beside the way to light their passage. Then in the grey of the morning, 'at the hour when one

man begins as it were to be able to recognize another,' they reach once more the gate of the city. Thence they move along the streets in solemn procession, 'all the inhabitants, great and small, rich and poor, for on that day no man gives over his watching until morning.' Their goal is the chapel *ad crucem*, and there they read in the Gospels the trial and condemnation of Jesus. It is already daybreak when they have finished, but still the Bishop detains them for a while—

Exhorting them that since they have laboured all the night and have yet to labour through the coming day they lose not heart, but hope in the Lord, who will make them the greater return for their labour; and so encouraging them as best he can, he charges them, saying: Go ye now in the meantime to your houses and rest awhile, but at the second hour of the morning (eight o'clock) see that ye are all ready here, that from then until noon ye may be able to behold the holy wood of the Cross, as we know, each one of us, that it will profit us for our salvation; for at noon it behoves us all to meet again in this spot before the Cross, that until nightfall we may devote ourselves to reading and to prayer.

And so, after a brief rest of a couple of hours, during which, short as it is, the more fervent find time to visit the church on Mount Sion, to pray by the column at which our Lord was scourged, they once more gather round the chapel of the Cross

for the ceremony of the adoration which the Lady Egeria thus describes:

The Bishop's chair, that which is now in use, is placed on Golgotha *post Crucem*. The Bishop [1] seats himself in his chair, round the table in a circle stand the deacons, and then they bring forth the case of silver gilded in which lies the holy wood of the Cross. It is opened, the contents taken out, and both the wood of the Cross and the title [2] are laid upon the table. When therefore it has been placed upon the table, the Bishop, still seated, lays his hands upon the upper surface of the wood, while the deacons who stand around keep watch. Now, this strict guard is kept because it is the custom that all the people, faithful and catechumens, should come up one by one, bow before the table, kiss the sacred wood, and pass on. And since it is said that at some time or other a man fixed his teeth in it, and would have stolen some of the holy wood, therefore a watch is kept by the deacons who stand around, that no one who comes up should dare to do the like again. In this way, therefore, the whole people pass through, one by one, all of them bowing down, touching the

1 This, it would seem, if Signor Gamurrini's views are correct, must have been the same St. Cyril from whose Catechetical Instructions we quoted above.

2 The *title* was still preserved in Jerusalem when Antoninus Martyr visited the Holy Places about the year 570. 'I saw,' he tells us, 'and took into my hand and kissed the title which was placed over the head of Jesus, and on which was written, *Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judæorum*.' More than one of the writers who describe the discovery of the Cross make express mention of the finding of the title.

Cross and the title, first with their forehead, and then with their eyes ; and so after kissing the Cross they pass on, but no one puts out his hand to touch it. . . . And thus until noon the whole populace move through, entering by one door and departing by another.

Although the veneration of the holy Cross in our churches is not attended by such associations as impressed the pilgrims of Jerusalem in Egeria's time, still the ceremony of the kissing of the cross even as we see it now, is one of the most touching and devotional in the whole range of our liturgical services. Not only is the rite itself most striking by which high and low, rich and poor, humble themselves side by side in order to pay veneration to the mystery of our redemption, but the Church on Good Friday has lavished upon this portion of her service the most exquisite of all her responses and canticles. I am afraid that it is one of the unfortunate results of the cramped arrangement of many of our Holy Week books, that the faithful are not tempted to read more in them than they can possibly help, and that the rich profusion of chants with which the ceremony of kissing the Cross is provided is too often overlooked. And yet nowhere in our liturgy shall we find hymns more worthy of devout meditation than the *Pange lingua gloriosi lauream certaminis* and the *Crux fidelis ;* while the prose antistrophic introduction to these, the *Improperia* or ' Re-

proaches,' sung, as it usually is, to an arrangement which is universally admitted to be Palestrina's masterpiece, stands absolutely unrivalled in its impressiveness; I borrow the first portion of Canon Oakeley's translation—

THE KISSING OF THE CROSS IN FRANCE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. (*From Picart, 'Cérémonies'.*)

What, O my people, have I done to thee?
What have I done? How wrong'd thee? Answer Me.
From Egypt's land I led and rescued thee,
And thou hast wrought a bitter cross for Me.

Response.

Holy God,
Holy and strong,
Holy and immortal,
Have mercy on us.

Full forty years along the desert sand
I led thee with a Father's gentle hand,
And gave thee for thy meat the angels' food,
And brought thee to a fertile land and good;
Was it for this which I have done to thee
That thou preparedst this bitter Cross for Me?
Holy God, etc.

What could I do, and have not done for Mine?
I planted thee a fair and fruitful vine,
And thou hast served Me bitterly enough,
And with thine acrid juices, crude and rough,
My parched and fever'd lips hast rudely plied,
And plunged a javelin in thy Saviour's side.
Holy God, etc.

Then after other shorter reproaches we are brought to the *Crux fidelis*. I reproduce a few of the stanzas as rendered by the same translator.

O faithful Cross, thou peerless Tree!
No forest boasts the like to thee,
Leaf, flower, and bud;
Sweet is the Wood, and sweet its weight,
And sweet the nails that penetrate
Thee, thou sweet Wood.

Sing, O my tongue, devoutly sing
The laurels of our glorious King;
Proclaim aloud the triumph high
Of the Cross's victory,
How, on that altar meekly laid,
Our price the world's Redeemer paid.

Response.

O faithful Cross, thou peerless Tree!
No forest boasts the like to thee,
Leaf, flower, and bud.

What time our first forefather ate
The fruit that wrought his woeful fate,
Our high Creator piteous mourn'd
His righteous law by creatures scorned,
And, fain to make the damage good,
Through Wood revoked the curse of wood.

Response.

Sweet is the Wood and sweet its weight,
And sweet the nails that penetrate
Thee, Thou sweet Wood!

Not to be tedious, I pass to two of the later stanzas, *Flecte ramos* and *Sola digna*.

Bow down thy branches, haughty tree;
Suspend thy wonted cruelty;
Relax thy tightened arms; repress,
For once, thine inborn stubbornness;
Thy Royal burden gently bear,
And spare our dying God, oh spare!
Sweet is the Wood, etc.

'Twas thou alone wert meet esteemed
The Lamb to bear, who man redeemed;
'Tis thou, unshaken Ark, bedew'd
With streams of all-availing Blood,
That shipwreck'd man dost safely guide,

Secure in port for aye to bide.
O faithful Cross, etc.

It has already been noticed that the details of the ceremonial which accompanies the adoration of the Cross have varied considerably at different periods. The practice of chanting the *Improperia* alternately with the *Trisagion* does not appear in any of the Roman *Ordines* before the fourteenth century, but in the Frankish dominions and in England we find it many centuries earlier. The *Trisagion* itself or *Tersanctus* (*Holy, Holy, Holy*), which is repeated, of course, in every Mass at the end of the Preface, appears here in the extended form which it is said to have assumed in Constantinople in the time of the Patriarch Proclus, about A.D. 446. According to an extremely improbable story preserved in the Greek *Menologium*, on occasion of a great earthquake in Constantinople, a whirlwind came at the same time and carried a young child off his legs high into the air. The Emperor Theodosius and the Patriarch cried aloud in their distress, *Kyrie eleison*. Whereupon the child came to the ground again unhurt, and he at once, in a loud voice, enjoined upon all present that they should in future invoke God as *Agios o Theos, Agios ischyros, Agios athanatos*, 'Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy and Immortal,' after which the child immediately expired.[1] The Greek words,

[1] Kutschker, *Die Heiligen Gebräuche*, vol. ii. p. 274.

though printed in Latin characters, are retained in the service of Good Friday, just as *Kyrie eleison* has always been used untranslated in its Greek form.

This mixture of Greek and Latin in the *Improperia* has generally been held to be an evidence of their high antiquity, and Dr. Probst goes so far as to say that this portion of the liturgy of Good Friday is, with the exception of the Canon of the Mass, the oldest part of the Roman Missal.[1]

But Mr. Edmund Bishop, a much more reliable authority on such a question, has come to a very different conclusion.[2] He considers that the *Agios o Theos* probably formed part of the Good Friday Office in Rome in the eleventh century, and that it was certainly in use at that date at Farfa, close to Rome, but that it was not known to the Roman rite two centuries earlier. And he adds: 'The earliest distinct attestation that I can find of it is (for Good Friday) in the Pontifical of Prudentius of Troyes (846–861) just at the time when the reaction against the lately fashionable Roman ritual movement had set in.' According to an hypothesis suggested by the same writer, the *Agios o Theos*, which thus appears in the middle of the ninth century in France, is simply the revival, in another setting, of a feature

1 *Lehre und Gebet*, p. 269.
2 "Kyrie Eleison" in the *Downside Review*, December 1899.

in the old Gallican Mass. The earliest suggestion of the *Improperia* of which the *Agios* now forms a part is to be found seemingly in the Bobbio Missal. It is in this Missal also that the name of the *Aius* (? *Agius*) is twice mentioned—a puzzling word which meets us first in the description of the Gallican liturgy which we owe to St. Germanus of Paris.

To return to the adoration of the Cross. The practice of the sacred ministers removing their shoes in this ceremony is probably a modified survival of the age when even the Pope walked barefoot on this day from one Roman Basilica to another with all his retinue, just as the triple prostration which we now use in approaching to kiss it is a relaxation of the old mediæval custom of creeping to the Cross on hands and knees. Thus it was that St. Louis, King of France, dressed himself in hair-cloth and, with bared feet and head and neck exposed, crept on his knees from his throne to kiss the Cross on Good Friday, followed by all his children, having previously in the early morning visited barefoot all the churches in the city. It may be mentioned that the still common practice of making an offering at the time of the veneration of the holy Cross is also an ancient usage, and is retained even in the Papal ceremonial of the Sistine Chapel.

With regard to our English practice, the author of the *Durham Rites* says that at that place, in the time of Henry VIII, the

'Cross was laid upon a velvet cushion, having St. Cuthbert's arms upon it all embroider'd with gold,' set upon the 'lowest greeses or steps in the quire, where two monks held the picture [image][1] of our Saviour betwixt them, sitting on either side of it. And then 'one of the said monks did rise, and went a pretty space from it, and setting himself upon his knees with his shoes put off, very reverently he crept upon his knees unto the said cross, and most reverently did kiss it; and after him the other monk did so likewise, and then they sate down on either side of the said cross, holding it betwixt them. Afterward the prior came forth of his stall, and did sit him down upon his knees with his shoes off in like sort, and did creep also unto the said cross, and all the monks after him, one after another, in the same manner and order; in the meantime the whole quire singing a hymn.'

It would take me too far from my present subject to enter at any length upon the question of the nature of the veneration paid to the holy Cross. The Church does not shrink from using the word *adoratio*, but she has always understood perfectly what she meant by it. Thus while the Christian poet Prudentius says of Constantine that he, the supreme ruler, adores the standard of the cross—

Vexillumque crucis summus dominator adorat,

1 'Picture' and 'image' were at the period synonymous terms.

St. Ambrose tells us of St. Helen: 'She found the title of the Cross, she adored [Christ] the King, not certainly the wood, because this is a mere pagan error and a vain deceit of the impious; but she adored Him who hung upon the Cross and whose name was written upon the title.' And not only has the Church clearly understood and defined the meaning of her own ritual, but in the middle ages, long before the Council of Trent spoke so plainly and clearly upon the subject, her priests were at pains to instruct the rude and ignorant so as to preserve them from superstition and all danger of idolatry. I will venture to quote a passage or two from a book already mentioned in a previous chapter, *Dives and Pauper*, a manual of popular religious instruction written a hundred years before the Reformation, and frequently issued by our first printers.

Dives.—On Good Friday all over holy Church men creep to the Cross and worship the Cross.

Pauper.—That is sooth [true], but not as thou meanest. The Cross that we creep to and worship so highly that time is Christ Himself that died on the Cross that day for our sin and our sake. . . . He is that Cross, brighter than all the stars of the world, as holy Church singeth and sayeth: *O crux splendidior cunctis astris mundi*, etc.; and as Bede saith, for as much as Christ was most despised of mankind on Good Friday, therefore holy Church hath ordained that on the Good Friday men should do Him most worship. And for this cause we do that great high

worship that day not to the cross that the priest holdeth in his hand, but to Him that died for us all, that day, upon the Cross. For oftentime that Cross that the priest holdeth in his hand is full unreverenced and unthend [uncouth ?].

And then a little farther on, the devout author goes on to instruct us how we should use the crucifix and put it to profit, quoting these very beautiful words of St. Bernard:

And, as St. Bernard biddeth, take heed by the image how His head is bowed down to thee all ready to kiss thee and come at one with thee. See how His arms and hands be spread abroad ready to halse [embrace] thee and take thee to His mercy. See how His side was opened and His heart cloven in two, in token that His heart is always open to thee, and ready to love thee and forgive thee all thy trespass, if thou wilt amend thee and ask mercy. Take heed also how His feet were nailed full hard to the tree, in token that He will not flee away, but abide with thee and dwell without end. On this manner I pray thee read thy book,[1] and fall down to the ground and give lowly thanksgiving to your Lord; which would do so much for thee ; and worship Him above all things ; not the image, not the stock, stone, nor tree, but Him that died on the tree. Do thou kneel, if thou wilt, *before* the image, not *to* the image, for it seeth thee not, it heareth thee not, and it understandeth thee not. And so make your offering *before* the image, not *to*

[1] The 'book,' of course, is the crucifix.

the image, and so do thy pilgrimage, for if thou shouldest do it for the image or to it, then were it idolatry.[1]

The Mass of the Presanctified

It hardly need be said that the 'Mass of the Presanctified' (*Missa presanctificatorum*), as it is commonly called, is no true Mass; that is to say, it is not, theologically speaking, a sacrifice. In reality, the rite which closes the ceremonies of Good Friday is no more than a Communion service, although a certain solemnity is given to it by the employment of liturgical forms and acts which are usually associated only with the Mass itself. In the Greek Church throughout Lent the Mass of the Presanctified is celebrated every day, but the Holy Sacrifice itself is only offered on Sundays. It has been maintained that this custom can be traced back to the time of the councils of Laodicea (A.D. 314) and Trullo, but the matter is very uncertain.[2] In the Western Church it is probable that the sacrifice was not much more frequently offered than in the Eastern, although in this case we have not the same evidence of the use of any rite which simulated the forms and ceremonies of the Mass itself.

[1] *Dives and Pauper*, Precept I. ch. iv. The same theme is dealt with at large by the anti-Wicliffite writer Pecock in his *Repressor*, from which I have quoted in the chapter on Palm Sunday.

[2] See Raible in *Der Katholik*, February and March 1901.

Mgr. Duchesne professes to have proved[1] that in the time of Pope Innocent I, about the beginning of the fifth century, there was usually no sacrifice celebrated in Rome even on Wednesdays and Fridays. There was indeed a 'station,' which involved a fast, and there was a *synaxis* or religious service. It also seems very probable that this service, which no doubt resembled closely the earlier portion of the Good Friday office with its three lessons and its solemn prayer for the Church, was terminated by the reception of the Holy Communion. To pass from this to a rite which might deserve to be called a Mass of the Presanctified required but a very short step indeed. However, on this point no satisfactory evidence is forthcoming. All that can be said is that the concluding ceremonies of our present Good Friday function were probably to be witnessed in the early Church repeatedly throughout the year, but that while greater and greater freedom was gradually permitted in offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, extending first to Sundays and festivals, and then to certain defined days in the week, and finally to all week-days, a feeling of respect for the sublime mystery enacted on Mount Calvary has always prevented the Church from permitting Mass to be offered on this one day in the year, and on this one day alone.[2]

[1] *Christian Worship*, pp. 238, 239.

[2] In the Ambrosian Rite the Mass of the Presanctified is unknown.

The ceremonies of the Mass of the Presanctified are sufficiently described in the Holy Week book. The rubric tells us briefly:

When the ceremony is almost finished, the candles are lighted, and the Cross is placed again upon the altar. Then the priest, with his ministers and clergy, go in procession to the place where the Blessed Sacrament was put the day before, from whence he brings it back in the same order as it was carried thither.

The splendid hymn, *Vexilla Regis*, of Venantius Fortunatus, who died A.D. 609, is sung during the procession to a singularly impressive tone. This hymn, like the *Pange lingua gloriosi lauream certaminis* of the same author, which is heard during the adoration of the Cross, may challenge almost the second place of honour among the triumphs of the mediæval hymn-writers. No translation can be adequate, but the following version from *Hymns Ancient and Modern* may be cited as among the best:

The Royal Banners forward go,
The cross shines forth in mystic glow;
Where He in flesh, our flesh who made,
Our sentence bore, our ransom paid.

There whilst He hung, His sacred side
By soldier's spear was opened wide,
To cleanse us in the precious flood
Of water mingled with His Blood.

Fulfilled is now what David told
In true prophetic song of old,
How GOD the heathens' King should be,
For GOD is reigning from the tree.

O tree of glory, tree most fair,
Ordained those holy limbs to bear,
How bright in purple robe it stood,
The purple of a Saviour's Blood!

Upon its arms, like balance true,
He weighed the price for sinners due,
The price which none but He could pay,
And spoiled the spoiler of his prey.

After the procession the rubric tells us:

The priest, having placed the Blessed Sacrament on the altar, incenses it on his knees, and lays it on the corporal. The wine and water are put into the chalice, and incense into the censer; with which the priest incenses the sacred Host and the offering of wine and water.

There is something singularly impressive about the very strangeness of these 'maimed rites,' and this we feel most of all when the priest, after washing his hands and reciting the *Orate Fratres*, proceeds immediately, without Preface or consecratory prayer, to sing in the ferial tone the words of the *Pater noster*.

I will only pause here to remark how clearly this liturgy of the Presanctified marks out for us

what portion of the text of the Mass was anciently regarded as essential and mystically operative in the sacrifice. Everything points to the conclusion that from the beginning of the Preface to just before the *Pater noster*—the point, it will be remembered, where the oil of the sick is consecrated, and where the fruits of the earth, animals, etc., were formerly blessed—the words of the liturgy were regarded as forming *one* sacred sacrificial prayer corresponding to the anaphora of oriental liturgies. When we are told of St. Gregory the Great that he introduced the *Pater noster* into the liturgy *statim post precem*, 'immediately after the prayer,' this is undoubtedly the 'prayer' which is meant. It is also very probable that in the earliest times Christians did not trouble to ask themselves very definitely what was the exact point at which the change of the elements took place. They were satisfied that it took place somewhere during the prayer. We are accustomed in our Missals nowadays to print all the 'words of consecration' in large type. If our forefathers in the faith had been familiar with printing, I think that they would have used large type for the whole, from the beginning of the Preface down to the *Pater noster*. I venture to insist a little upon this point, because it seems to me important as a solution of what is sometimes known as the Epiclesis difficulty. In any case it is noteworthy that in this Mass of the Presanctified, which is no sacrifice, the whole of that

prayer with which coincides exactly the use of crosses made over the Host should be entirely omitted. The prayer *Libera nos*, which follows the *Pater noster*, is, on this day, designedly spoken aloud to show, as I conceive, that no sacrificial words are being uttered, an idea which might otherwise be suggested by the quasi-elevation which follows. Then comes the Communion of the priest, and without any Post-Communion prayer or any salutation of the people the celebrant genuflects to the crucifix, and with his ministers silently leaves the sanctuary.

It may be interesting in concluding this chapter to quote a popular description of the Good Friday ritual written nine hundred years ago, in Anglo-Saxon, by Abbot Ælfric. It brings home to us how little change there has been in all that interval:

I pray you (he says) that you take heed of yourselves, so as your books instruct you how you should do in these days to come. Housel may not be allowed on Good Friday, because Christ suffered on that day for us; but there must, nevertheless, be done what appertains to that day: so that two lessons be read, with two tracts (*tractum*) and with two collects, and Christ's Passion; and afterwards the prayers. And let them pray to the holy rood, so that they all greet the rood of God with kiss. Let the priest then go to the altar of God with the housel bread that he hallowed on Thursday, and with unhallowed wine mixed with water, and cover it with his corporale, and

then immediately say: '*Oremus; Preceptis salutaribus moniti*,' and '*Pater noster*' to the end. And then let him say to himself: '*Libera nos quæso Domine ab omnibus malis*,' and aloud: '*Per omnia sæcula sæculorum.*' Let him then put a part of the housel into the chalice, as it is, however, usual; then let him go silently to the housel: and for the rest, let look who will.[1]

[1] 'The Canons of Ælfric,' in Thorpe, *Ancient Laws*, p. 449.

CHAPTER IX

The Devotion of the 'Three Hours'

THERE is a tiny little booklet in English, printed in London as far back as 1806[1]—a copy is now lying before me—in which is set forth, to use the words of the title-page, 'The Devotion of the Three Hours of the Agony of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, as practised every year on Good Friday in the Church del Giesu (*sic*) at Rome, from the 18th to the 21st hour, viz., from 12 to 3 o'clock, with a Plenary Indulgence to all who assist thereat in the above mentioned Church, granted by his Holiness Pius VI, Anno 1789. Originally composed at Lima in Peru, in the Spanish Language. By the Rev. F. Alphonsa (*sic*) Messia, S.J.' Seeing how popular the devotion of the Three Hours has become in these later times, not only among Father Messia's own

[1] This little volume (96 pp. 32mo) was printed 'by Keating, Brown, & Co., No. 37, Duke Street, Grosvenor Square,' in 1806. The edition is unknown to De Backer and Sommervogel, who only mention two later editions, one of Dublin in 1844, and the other of London (Dolman) 1854.

co-religionists, but amongst Anglicans also, the subject seems to call for some notice in these chapters on Holy Week. The early history is more obscure than one would wish, but I will endeavour to set down as concisely as possible such information as I have been able to collect about it.

Father Alonso Messia, who first introduced this pious custom, was born at Pacaraos in Peru, on January 1, 1665, his father being at that time *corregidor*, the chief civil magistrate, of the district. It is needless to dwell upon the details of his life. At an early age he became a Jesuit, and spent many years in the College of San Pablo, Lima, where he filled various posts of authority. He is described as a man of truly apostolic spirit. 'His duties in the confessional,' we are told, 'his daily sermon in the market-place, his frequent visits to the prisons and hospitals, his conferences and literary undertakings, absorbed the whole of his time, without ever leaving him a moment to rest. In spite of the many ties and anxieties which fell to him as Rector of the house in which he resided, he was engaged unceasingly in works of charity.'[1]

It was not strange that he endeared himself

[1] General M. de Mendiburu, *Diccionario Historico-Biografico del Peru*, vol. v. p. 310. Father Messia's Life was written by a fellow-Jesuit, Father Juan Jose de Salazar, and was printed the year after his death. The book seems to be very rare, and I have unfortunately been unable to procure sight of a copy. It was unknown to Carayon, and seems to be incorrectly described in the folio edition of De Backer.

greatly to the hearts of the people; so much so that when the General of the Society in 1705 appointed him Provincial of the mission of Quito,[1] an uproar took place at the idea of his leaving, and it was found impossible to carry the nomination into effect. Six years later, however, he was appointed Provincial of Peru, and, as this did not take him away permanently from Lima, the citizens seem to have celebrated the occasion with public rejoicings. Father Alonso was also appointed, at various times, *calificador* of the Inquisition, and Doctor of the University of St. Mark, with many other distinctions.

As an illustration of the authority which he enjoyed, we may mention that the then Viceroy of Peru, the Marquis of Castellfuerte, who is described as a man of stern and inflexible character, took Father Messia for his confessor, and 'paid extraordinary respect to his decisions.' The following letter is cited by General Mendiburu in proof of this statement. It was written to Father Messia by the Viceroy, from Callao, in 1725, at a time when the latter was overwhelmed with the pressure of business.

Most Reverend Father,—I forward the enclosed case (*consulta*) to obtain your Reverence's opinion

1 There were seemingly two Provinces of the Society of Jesus in these regions, one called the Province of Peru, which had its headquarters at Lima; the other known from its principal residence as the Province of Quito.

upon it. The matter is so important that I desire to have a safe conscience, and to settle everything in accordance with justice, and I was resolved to take no step of any sort which was not guided by so Christian a rule as is the prudent, learned and holy decision of your Reverence. I remain, with deep veneration and obedience, etc., at the feet of your Reverence,

CASTELLFUERTE.

Father Messia died in 1732, at the age of seventy-seven. The editor of the most authoritative modern work on Peruvian history describes him as a man conspicuous for his humility, his spirit of penance, his charity, and his uprightness. 'He rendered many services to religion, and helped to elevate the moral tone of his countrymen, especially showing great devotedness in assisting the families of those who were ruined by the earthquake of 1687.'[1]

It is in connexion with this last-named event that the Devotion of the Three Hours seems to have had its origin. A not improbable tradition asserts that the terrible catastrophe of 1687, which was only eclipsed by the still more disastrous visitation which in 1746 laid the city of Lima in ruins, first suggested to the holy Jesuit the idea of propitiating the offended majesty of God by some conspicuous and public act of atonement. The earthquake of 1687 actually took place on the 20th of October; but six months

[1] Mendiburu, l.c. p. 313.

before, on the night of the 1st of April, which that year fell in Easter week, a premonitory warning had been given by a shock so severe, that it awoke all the sleeping inhabitants of Lima, and brought them out of their beds into the streets.[1] If I am not misinterpreting the description given in the printed *Relations*, our Father Alonso was undoubtedly one of the preachers who bade the people take warning, and threatened them with further chastisements if they neglected the admonition. After this, according to the same account, there followed a still more startling portent. An image of our Lady in a private chapel was observed, on the feast of the Visitation (July 2), to shed tears and to be bathed in moisture, in a way of which no natural explanation could be given. I should be sorry to commit myself to any expression of opinion regarding the authenticity of this marvel, but there can be no doubt that the believers in it were thoroughly sincere, and that the phenomenon was repeatedly observed by crowds of people between the beginning of July and the time of the earthquake, as well as afterwards. A good deal of popular excitement seems to have resulted, and after the awful catastrophe of October 20, the terrified inhabitants, fearing to trust themselves inside the churches, half of which were in ruins, erected

[1] See the account printed in the *Collecion de las Relaciones de los mas notabiles Terremotos*, etc., edited by Colonel of Cavalry M. de Odriozola, pp. 25 and 199.

some temporary altars in the great open square of the city. There the statue was solemnly enshrined, and became the object of much popular devotion. To recall the memory of this terrible chastisement, an annual celebration was instituted on the anniversary of its occurrence, which was preceded by an eight days' mission. The closing ceremony took place on the 20th of October of each year in the Jesuit church of San Pablo, to which Father Messia was attached, and it was marked both by a General Communion and by a solemn procession, in which the Viceroy, the Audiencia, and the Cathedral Chapter took part. Much evidence might be produced of the fervour with which this custom was kept up for long years afterwards,[1] but I will content myself here with quoting an accidental reference to it contained in a diary written after the still more terrible catastrophe of 1746.[2] Under date October 20, 1747, the writer states :

On this day there took place in the evening the supplication before the Holy Crucifix of Contrition (*la rogativa al Sancto Cristo de la Contricion*), and the concluding service of the week's mission instituted by Father Francis Xavier, a former Provincial of the

[1] There is mention of it, for instance, in a little four-page leaflet entitled, *Memorias y Noticias de los Sucesos sobresalientes en esta ciudad de Lima*, 1723 ; and in the Life of Father Francis del Castillo, S.J., by Buendia, p. 643. Also in the poem of Peralta Barnuero, entitled, *Lima Fundada*, bk. vi. st. 90.

[2] Printed by Odriozola, *Terremotos*, p. 126.

Society of Jesus. This is usually conducted by the Jesuit Fathers in the church of their College of San Pablo, and during it they preach discourses upon suitable subjects to crowded congregations, with great fruit to souls. And on the same day in the morning, in memory of the terrible destruction caused to life and property by the earthquake of October 20, 1687, and in commemoration also of the sweat and tears of the miraculous image of the Candelaria,[1] . . . there was held in the presence of the Viceroy, etc., the solemn celebration of the festival vowed and endowed by the City under the title of Our Lady of the Warning. On this festival there have been accustomed to communicate in the church of San Pablo as many as ten, twelve, and even fourteen thousand persons, but in this year, 1747, both on account of the multitude of devout persons who have died, as also on account of the large numbers who have left the city, the Hosts consumed in distributing Holy Communion hardly amounted to four thousand.

Now in the impossibility of consulting the Life of Father Messia, which alone can supply accurate information, I am inclined to suggest that in the *Rogativa* before 'the Holy Crucifix of Contrition,' alluded to in the foregoing extract, we may probably trace the first germ of the devotion of the Three Hours, afterwards practised on Good Friday alone. It seems clear from other sources that certain exercises of piety were performed

[1] In this miraculous statue the Child in our Lady's arms grasped a candle. The statue was hence known as *La Candelaria*.

on Fridays by a confraternity directed by Father Messia, under the name of the 'School of Christ,' in a chapel of the church of San Pablo, in which were venerated both the above-mentioned statue of the Candelaria, and the Crucifix known as the *Cristo de la Contricion*.[1] The devotion excited by, and the fruit to souls which resulted from, these exercises were evidently very remarkable, and we can well believe that some similar practice of piety, extending over the space of three hours, may have been devised by Father Messia to mark the greatest Friday of the year, the day which commemorates the Passion and Death of our Saviour. The need of some special form of supplication and atonement may very possibly have been further brought home to the inhabitants of Lima by one of the numerous minor shocks of earthquake which alarmed the citizens between 1687 and 1746.[2] Be this, however, as it may, we shall do well to turn now to the Preface of the tiny booklet already referred to, which I shall take the liberty to quote entire. I have made no attempt to alter the writer's phraseology.

Alphonsa Messia, an apostolic man of the Society

[1] These facts are attested by the Life of Father Castillo, p. 643, and by an earlier passage in the document already cited in *Terremotos*, p. 125. Cf. the preface by Father Uriarte, contributed to the Spanish edition of Cardinal Bellarmine's *De Septem Verbis*.

[2] There were earthquakes in 1688, 1694, 1697, 1698, 1699, 1713, 1715, 1724 and 1725. I have before me the contemporary *Relacion* of 1699. Even on this occasion sixteen persons perished in the ruins, and much damage was done to property.

of Jesus, was the first who introduced this devotion at his native city, Lima. It began at midday, and continued till three in the afternoon on Good Friday: and so great was the spiritual joy and consolation felt by those who assisted him on this occasion, that it met with general approbation, and afterwards made a rapid progress.

At first the servant of God, accompanied by several devout persons, practised it privately in his own church; but the year following, so much was it thronged by a concourse of people, anxious to assist at a devotion so properly adapted to the day, that the pressure of the crowd obliged him to go into the pulpit. From thence it diffused itself through nearly all the parish churches and monasteries of religious in the city of Lima: from thence over Peru, Chili, and Quito; and at length transferred itself even to Carthagena, Panama, Mexico, and other provinces of the kingdom.

But as the genius of mankind is various, no sooner had this devotion transplanted itself into different places, among persons who had not seen it practised at Lima, than there appeared so great a diversity in the books of the Three Hours, that one could scarcely believe it to be the same devotion which had begun at Peru; the method was now become so confused and difficult, whereas at first it had been plain and easy. To apply a remedy to so great an inconvenience, it was thought necessary to translate the author's book, and give an explanation of the manner in which it was practised by himself, in order that by printing and publishing both a more general uniformity

might prevail in the performance of a devotion which was so rapidly extending itself among the faithful in other cities and provinces. Good Friday being, therefore, a day held in such high veneration among the faithful, it were to be wished that, on so remarkable a day, Christians would emulate with each other in the fervent practice of the Devotion to the Three Hours of the Agony of Jesus Christ, our ever blessed Redeemer; the method whereof is as follows:

A crucifix, or image of Jesus crucified, being placed on the altar, with a convenient number of lights (decorated in some places in so solemn a manner, that the very sight alone inspires respect and veneration), the priest, who is the director of the function, placing himself before the altar, or else in the pulpit, begins by making the sign of the cross; and after having invoked the Holy Ghost, he makes a short exhortation, in order to persuade his hearers how just and necessary a duty it is for a Christian to accompany his Redeemer during the Three Hours of His Agony on the Cross, which, out of His immense charity He suffered for our redemption; a subject which must naturally excite the most tender devotion. He then proceeds to explain, as well what the Saints have said as what they have learned by revelation, on the utility of accompanying Jesus Christ in His agony, in order that we may become worthy to be accompanied by Him at ours. Much may be learned on this article from Albert the Great and St. Bernard, from the Lives of St. Catharine of Siena, St. Gertrude, St. M. Magdalene de Pazzi, and many others. Afterwards, the priest having recited with the people

something adapted to the subject, such as the *Salve*, or other prayers to our Blessed Lady of Dolours, and all the assistants being seated, he begins to read the Introduction, at the conclusion whereof all kneel and meditate in silence on some point of the Passion, whilst the choir, accompanied by the harmonious melody of instruments, sings something analogous to it.

The priest then, having read leisurely with a tender affectionate voice the First Word, the people kneel and recite or sing some stanzas or verses illustrative thereof. At the end of the canticle the priest rises, and the people, still remaining on their knees, recite alternately with him ten *Paters* and *Aves*, or any other prayer that may be found at the end of each *word ;* and this method is observed at the termination of each of the Seven Words.

We must here observe, that the Director should confine himself so strictly to time as not to fall short of, or exceed three hours : for, as the intent of this devotion is, that it should finish precisely at the time that Jesus Christ expired ; so the recital of it must be performed slower or faster in proportion to the measure of the time that remains ; and if he perceives that there remains more than sufficient, he may add a short exhortation, or such of the canticles as may be suitable, in order to arrive just at the expiration of the Three Hours. When this term approches, after the *seventh word*, the priest reads, with many pauses of tenderness and devotion, the last apostrophe at the end of the book. Should there yet remain any time, he says the salutations to the five sacred wounds

of Jesus Christ, which may be also found at the end; but if there be no time to spare, they are omitted.

On the dial-hand's approaching the point of Three, all kneel down, whilst the choir, with a tender voice, sings the *Credo*, measured in such a manner, that when the clock strikes they sing, *Crucifixus et mortuus est;* at which words the priest rises, and with a loud and compassionate voice exclaims, *Jesus Christ is dead!—our Redeemer has expired!—our Father has ceased to live!*—Then with great affection he pronounces an exhortation to tears of compassion, of tenderness, and of sorrow for sin: addressing himself, alternately, to Jesus Christ, to His most Holy Mother of Dolours, to sinners, etc., when all finishes with a fervent Act of Contrition.[1]

It will be noticed from this account that the devotion, as originally devised by Father Messia, and as practised in Italy in the early years of the last century, differs in more than one respect from the plan now commonly followed. What we are now accustomed to is a series of discourses with musical interludes, the congregation kneeling only during the recital of a few vocal prayers. The original conception was a three hours' meditation made by the people themselves, upon their knees for the most part, points being read aloud for convenience sake at suitable intervals. The only extempore discourse seems to have been an exhortation delivered at the beginning, with, in

[1] Preface iii.–xi.

some cases, a similar address at the close, after the three hours had really been completed. Even in Spain this plan seems early to have undergone some slight modification. The following description by the unfortunate Blanco White, which belongs presumably to the first decade of last century, will be read with interest :

The practice of continuing in meditation from twelve to three o'clock of this day—the time which our Saviour is supposed to have hung on the Cross—was introduced by the Spanish Jesuits, and partakes of the impressive character which the members of that Order had the art to impart to the religious practices by which they cherish the devotional spirit of the people. The church where the *three hours* is kept, is generally hung in black and made impervious to daylight. A large crucifix is seen on the high altar, under a black canopy, with six unbleached wax-candles, which cast a sombre glimmering on the rest of the church. The females of all ranks occupy, as usual, the centre of the nave, squatting or kneeling on the matted ground, and adding to the dismal appearance of the scene, by the colour of their veils and dresses.

Just as the clock strikes twelve, a priest in his cloak and cassock ascends the pulpit, and delivers a preparatory address of his own composition. He then reads the printed meditation on the *Seven Words*, or Sentences spoken by Jesus on the Cross, allotting to each such a portion of time as that, with the interludes of music which follow each of the readings, the whole

may not exceed three hours. The music is generally good and appropriate, and if a sufficient band can be collected, well repays to an amateur the inconvenience of a crowded church, where, from the want of seats, the male part of the congregation are obliged either to stand or kneel.

It is, in fact, one of the best works of Haydn, composed a short time ago for some gentlemen of Cadiz, who showed both their taste and liberality in thus procuring this masterpiece of harmony for the use of their country. It has been lately published in Germany under the title of *Sette Parole*.[1]

Haydn's music for the Seven Words was originally designed as a series of short symphonies for instruments only. After some years, however, he modified this plan, arranging the music for a chorus, with a *libretto* the source of which has been much disputed and still remains uncertain. In any case, these words have no apparent connexion with the *stanze* originally composed by Father Messia.[2] Haydn[3] himself has left us a

[1] *Letters from Spain*, pp. 260, 261. By 'Don Lucadio Doblado.' 1825.

[2] In spite of all efforts I have been unable to meet with an eighteenth century Spanish copy of Father Messia's original booklet. Even De Backer did not succeed in finding any Spanish copy of earlier date than 1800.

[3] In Pohl's *Biographie Joseph Haydns* several composers are named who have written upon the Seven Words. Before Haydn's time there were L. Senfl (in the sixteenth century; cf. *Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte*, 1876, p. 149), J. Glück, H. Schütz, and C. G. Schröter. In the past century there have been Count Castelbarko, Joseph Lutz, Mercadante, Gounod, and Th. Dubois. The

brief account of the occasion of his undertaking the *Sette Parole* in the year 1785. He writes concerning it in March, 1801 :

It was about fifteen years ago, that I was asked by one of the Canons of Cadiz to compose a piece of instrumental music on the Seven Words of Jesus on the Cross. At that time it was the custom every year during Lent to perform an Oratorio in the Cathedral at Cadiz, the effect of which was greatly heightened by the *mise-en-scène*. The walls, windows, and pillars of the church were draped in black cloth, and the religious gloom was only lightened by one large lamp hanging in the centre. At mid-day all the doors were closed, and the music commenced. After a fitting prelude, the Bishop ascended the pulpit, recited one of the Seven Words, and gave a meditation on it. When it was ended, he came down from the pulpit and knelt before the altar. This interlude was filled by the music. The Bishop mounted and left the pulpit for a second time, a third time, and so on, and on each occasion, after the close of the address, the orchestra recommenced playing. My composition had to be adapted to this method of execution. It was not an easy task to produce seven *Adagios* in succession, each of which must take about ten minutes to perform, without wearying the audience ;

last-named, whose beautiful, if slightly theatrical, composition has been performed for the last few years during the Three Hours at the Jesuit Church of Farm Street, London, first published his work in 1870.

and I soon found that I could not keep rigorously to the prescribed limits of time.[1]

In this account it is not very clear whether the meditations were read from a book or whether they were spoken discourses. In Italy, at any rate, it seems that the method of Father Messia was strictly adhered to. None the less, the devotion spread very rapidly there. It is mentioned by Brancadoro, the biographer of Pius VI, that he never failed to attend the Three Hours at the Church of the Gesù, and this Pope granted a Plenary Indulgence, Confession and Communion being of course presupposed, to all who assisted at it.[2] In 1818, according to Cancellieri,[3] the service was held in four or five other places in Rome beside the Gesù, and was known everywhere throughout the world. In England it seems to have been confined at first to a few Jesuit churches, but in the early sixties it was

[1] Pohl's *Biographie Joseph Haydns*, vol. i. p. 214. When Haydn sold the right of reproducing this composition in France to a Parisian publisher, he for a long time remained without payment. At last, when he had almost given up the hope of seeing his money, a box arrived one day from Paris. Haydn got his servant to open it, and found to his astonishment that it contained a chocolate tart. 'What possible use can it be to me?' he grumbled. However, he proceeded to cut it open to give a portion to the servant for his trouble, when out there tumbled a roll of silver pieces.

[2] I cannot make out whether this Indulgence has been extended to all who make the Three Hours in other churches throughout the world. Beringer, in his *Manual of Indulgences*, makes no mention of it.

[3] *Settimana Santa*, Appendix.

taken up by the Ritualists,[1] and since then has become strangely popular even with Anglicans of Evangelical views. St. Paul's Cathedral, London, has had a Three Hours' service on Good Friday for more than twenty years. Many of the other Cathedrals have followed suit; and there are also, of course, a number of the larger parish churches, besides the more distinctly Ritualistic centres, where the devotion has long been popular. In most of these, if I mistake not, the modern practice is followed of preaching a series of seven or eight little sermons, interrupted by music, but in some, a space is left free between each Word for quiet private meditation. Perhaps it may be interesting, before we pass further, to give a specimen of Father Messia's original meditations, which for so many years were simply read aloud. I borrow from a version published a few years since with an introduction by the present writer.[2]

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1 See in *The Guardian*, March 31, 1864, a letter from a correspondent who signs himself 'A Priest who was present.' St. Paul's Cathedral seems to have celebrated the 'Three Hours' for the first time in 1878.

2 London: Sands & Co. I am indebted to the kindness of the publishers for permission to reproduce the greater part of the Introduction in this present chapter.

THE FIRST WORD,

Uttered by our Saviour on the Cross.

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.

Behold our Heavenly Master sitting exalted in His doctor's chair, the gibbet of the Cross. Hitherto He has kept profound silence, and now He opens His Divine lips to teach the world in seven words the sublime doctrine of His love.

Be attentive, O my soul !—animate all thy powers : —it is God Himself who teaches thee : He will demand a strict account of these seven lessons. O Jesus, full of love for us ! O Divine Master ! Speak—speak, O Lord, Thy children hear Thee.

All nature is disturbed at beholding the sufferings of its Creator. The earth is covered with a thick darkness ; an earthquake rends the rocks asunder, and bursts open the graves ; the angels are horror-stricken at beholding their Lord in such cruel torments ; the devils rage with anger, because the chastisement which men deserve for their sins is not immediately inflicted on them, as it was upon themselves. We might imagine that all nature, irritated against sinners, demanded justice and vengeance of the Eternal Father : *Usquequo, Domine, sanctus et verus, non vindicas sanguinem Filii tui !* How long O Lord, just and holy, wilt Thou delay to wreak Thy vengeance upon sinners for the Blood of Thy innocent Son, and for all the injuries committed against Him ? We might imagine that at the moment this cry made

itself heard in Heaven, Divine Justice was on the point of discharging the thunders of its anger to avenge itself on criminal mankind.

But the Redeemer of the world, displaying His infinite charity, raises His nearly sightless eyes to His Eternal Father in humble obedience, and says : *My Father and my Lord, restrain the arm of Thy justice. I conjure Thee by this Cross upon which I die, by the Blood I shed without ceasing, I entreat, I claim as a right that Thou pardon sinners the crimes which have placed Me on this Cross.*

Father ! forgive them,—they know not what they do.

O sinful soul ! hearken attentively to this *first word*. Listen to Jesus, as He calls upon His Father who was your Father also from all eternity. Behold the greatness of your origin ; you are no less than the child of an Eternal God. O Eternal Father !—can I then call Thee my Father,—I, who am so ungrateful and guilty a child ? What strange blindness has separated me from Thee ? What an unaccountable folly to despise Thy caresses and Thy grace for the vile love of creatures ? Into what a miserable state have my sins brought me ? Whither do my passions lead me ? What a wretched condition I find myself in when I offend Thee. O most affectionate Father ! I am miserable in my sins ; to whom shall I turn my eyes ? I will turn them towards Thee, O Father of Mercy. But how can so ungrateful a sinner presume to return and appear in the presence of a Father whom he has so grievously offended ? Yes, return, O afflicted soul ! return—for God is still your Father. I will return ; but—miserable wretch as I am—my courage

fails me on account of my iniquities : my crimes are without number, and I fear lest those looks of love should be converted into looks of anger :—it is better to die than approach Him. Go, I say, repenting soul, go—for He is your Father ; and this Jesus, whom your sins have crucified, is your Brother : it is He who presents you to His Father ;—it is He who beseeches Him to pardon you, and offers His Blood for your sins. O Jesus, O loving Brother, give me those blessed feet that I may kiss them with my lips, and bathe them with my tears. What ! is it Thou who askest pardon for my crimes ? and is it possible I do not die of love for Thee ? Wretch that I am ; how great is the hardness of my heart ! Go then with confidence, O repenting soul. Go, sinner, and obtain pardon. Behold, Heaven, moved with pity, interests itself in your behalf. Your most merciful and compassionate Saviour prays thus to His Eternal Father for you : *O Father, behold at Thy feet these miserable sinners ! remember not, O Lord, that they have crucified Me, but rather that I die for them : instead of their sins, remember My love : not their ingratitude, but the Blood that I have shed. Look not upon their sins, but upon the life I offer for them on this Cross.*

Father ! forgive them,—they know not what they do.

The meditations are separated by some simple Spanish verses, meant to be sung as hymns, which echo the thought which has just been dwelt upon.

There is, so far as I have seen, an absolutely unanimous agreement in attributing the origin of the Three Hours service to Father Messia.

Neither is there room for doubt that the received history of its development, by which it is supposed to have spread from Peru to Spain, from Spain to Italy, and thence throughout the Christian world, is strictly accurate. A difficulty, however, has been raised on account of the existence, as far back as the year 1624, of a sermon by a Franciscan Friar, bearing the following title, *Sermo Trihorarius, de Præcipuis Dominicæ Passionis Mysteriis, habitus ipso die Parasceves*, a Fratre Nicolao Orano, Ord. Min., Lovanii, 1624. Curiously as this title seems to anticipate the service now familiar to us, the book stands alone and cannot, without further evidence, be pleaded against the clear tradition and the contemporary records which connect this devotion with the name of Father Messia. In the first place, *Sermo Trihorarius*, as used by a Latinist of that age, might as easily mean a sermon about the Three Hours as a three hours' sermon. It would not, I think, have sounded extravagant then for a preacher to entitle a similar discourse about the Burial of our Lord, etc., *Sermo Triduanus de præcipuis Christi Domini Mysteriis factis in Sepulchro*, where, of course, *Sermo Triduanus* would not mean a sermon three days' long, but a sermon about the three days. However, even granting that the word *Trihorarius* refers to the duration of the discourse, it is possible that the author only wished to recall the fact that he did actually preach on a particular occasion for

three hours together. Long sermons were much more in fashion then than they are now. Giàcomo Volaterrano, in his diary, printed by Muratori,[1] relates that in the year 1481, on Good Friday, William the Sicilian, of the household of the Cardinal of Amalfi, delivered a discourse on the Passion. 'He was a man learned in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and he passed in review all the mysteries of the Passion of Jesus Christ, confirming them by the authority and writings of the Hebrews and the Arabs, quoting their very words in their own language. The discourse, although it occupied the space of two hours, nevertheless delighted every one, both for the variety the preacher gave to it, as well as for the sound of the Hebrew and Arabic words, which he pronounced as though they were his own native tongue. Everybody commended the preacher, the Pontiff and the Cardinals among the first.'

It seems clear from this account that the impressiveness of 'that blessed word Mesopotamia,' has not been felt for the first time in our day.

Still more startling must have been the sermon which Father Evangelist Marcellino, a Franciscan Observant, preached upon the Passion in the Duomo of Florence in 1685, lasting three hours and a half. Cancellieri declares that in his time it was common for Spanish preachers to go

[1] xxiv. R.I. 130.

beyond two hours, a remark which is well borne out by the satires of Father Isla, in his *Fray Gerundio*.

However, what seems to me decisive in rejecting any claim which might be advanced on behalf of Fra Nicolas Orano, is the absence of any hint that the devotion was taken up by others. Even by the bibliographers of his own Order, as for instance, John à S. Antonio, his book is either overlooked or imperfectly described. The same John à S. Antonio gives an elaborately classified list of Franciscan sermons, and the occasions on which they were preached. In this, Fra Orano's sermon is alluded to, but it stands absolutely alone. To all appearance, he had no imitators even amongst his own Order. We are justified then, it seems to me, in refusing to allow that Father Messia's claim can be seriously contested until some evidence is produced of a *custom* of delivering such Three Hour sermons previously to his time.

The only other allusion I have found to any similar practice, is a statement made by Father J. E. de Uriarte, S.J., in his Preface to Bellarmine's *Seven Words*, already referred to. There is a little book, he says, entitled, *Constituciones y Reglas para el gobierno de la Real Congregacion de Indignos Esclavos del SS. Sacramento . . . en su Oratorio publico de la Calle del Olivar* (Constitutions and Rules for the administration of the Royal Confraternity of the Unworthy Slaves of

the Most Holy Sacrament . . . in their public Oratory of the Calle del Olivar), in which it is asserted that, 'as early as the year 1648, another most devout exercise was established and practised on Good Friday, which consists in the maintaining of an uninterrupted prayer in this Oratory from midday until three in the afternoon, in reverence of those same three hours during which our Saviour Jesus Christ hung dying upon the Cross. In order to arouse the devotion of those present, there are read at intervals the meditations on the Seven Words (las Meditaciones de las *Siete Palabras*) which our Lord spoke at that time.'[1] I must confess that, until better evidence is brought, I am inclined to believe that the date 1648 has been accidentally misprinted for 1748. The writer seems to refer to '*the* meditations of the Seven Words,' as to a well known exercise of devotion. This is intelligible enough in 1748, sixteen years after Father Messia's death, but we have no knowledge of any recognized set of meditations to which the words could apply in 1648. Cardinal Bellarmine's are a great deal too lengthy to have been used for such a purpose.

Finally, there is no difficulty in supposing that the same idea may have occurred independently to two or even to many persons. In Father Messia's case the germ fructified and spread. In

[1] Ch. iii., edit. 1780, p. 49.

Fra Orano's, the idea was still-born. That the Peruvian Jesuit had been anticipated, at least in one instance, and that more than thirteen hundred years before his day, we now know upon unexceptionable evidence. The account of this, which only came to light a few years since, is found in the document already so often referred to—the pilgrimage commonly attributed to St. Silvia, but, as we now know, written by the Spanish lady, Egeria. From her we learn the singularly interesting fact, that in the city of Jerusalem, within the basilica built by Constantine over the site of the Holy Sepulchre, there was celebrated at the end of the fourth century a three hours' service on Good Friday, closely akin in spirit to that devised by Father Messia. It is to be feared that the piety of modern days cannot bear comparison with that of Egeria and her contemporaries, but the object of our present service is identical with that of the assembly which she describes in the following terms :

But when (on Good Friday) the sixth hour has come, the people assemble in the court before the Cross, and there they are packed so tightly that it is hardly possible even to open the doors. The Bishop's chair is placed before the Cross, and from the sixth to the ninth hour, nothing is done but read those passages of the Scripture and the Holy Gospels which have reference to the Passion of our Saviour . . . And at the several lections and prayers there is such

emotion displayed and lamentation of all the people as is wonderful to hear. For there is no one, great or small, who does not weep on that day during those three hours, in a way which cannot be imagined, that the Lord should have suffered such things for us.

And thereupon when the ninth hour (three o'clock) approaches, that passage is read from the Gospel according to St. John where our Lord gave up the ghost; and when this has been read, a prayer is said and the assembly is dismissed.[1]

Not so very long since, the late Dean Farrar, in a sermon, which gave rise at the time to some little discussion, protested against that 'luxury of fantastic emotionalism' which was gratified in our modern methods of honouring Good Friday. In his idea nothing could be more 'unprimitive, unscriptural and un-Catholic' than the sentiment which spent the day in unnatural and useless attempts to realize the physical agonies of our Lord upon the Cross. It is astonishing that anyone who claimed to possess an acquaintance with patristic literature could so confidently tell his hearers that 'the aspect in which the early Christians invariably viewed the Cross was that of triumph and exaltation, never that of moaning and misery.' We have seen in the earlier chapters of this volume how, even before the general

[1] Cf. Cabrol, *Etude sur la Peregrinatio Silviæ*, pp. 106 and 168. I must express my regret at having made acquaintance with Abbot Cabrol's valuable monograph too late to make use of it in the earlier chapters of this volume.

observance of the season of Lent, a fast of extraordinary severity was observed on Good Friday, which as early as the time of St. Irenæus was held to be of Apostolic institution. Moreover, supposing that any critic were so perverse as to believe that the early Christians expressed their feelings of triumph and exultation by fasting for forty hours and refraining from celebrating the liturgy, we might appeal to the whole literature of the first four centuries as echoing those same sentiments of sorrow for sin and compassion with Christ crucified, which we find depicted by Egeria. At this epoch Palestine was visited by a continual stream of pilgrims who thronged thither like Egeria, from the most distant quarters of the Christian world. To Jerusalem they came, primarily to honour the Cross and to pay at the shrine of their Saviour's tomb a tribute, not of exultation, but of tears. Paula and Eustochium, in A.D. 386, writing from Bethlehem to Marcella in Rome, probably by the hand of St. Jerome, and anticipating in imagination her coming to Palestine to join them, say: 'And can we hope then to see the day when we may enter together the grotto of the Saviour [at Gethsemane], when we may weep at the sepulchre of the Lord, weep there with the Sister and the Mother,[1] kissing [*lambere*, i.e. licking], the wood of the Cross; and

[1] Vallarsi's notes suggest that Maria Cleophe and our Blessed Lady are intended.

on the Mountain of Olives be raised up in heart and in desire along with our Lord, ascending to Heaven?'[1] The joy, be it remarked, is kept for the site of the Ascension, the weeping is reserved for the sepulchre.

Or if, again, we wanted to know of what nature were the canticles and discourses which at such holy seasons kindled the devotion of those who assisted at them, we may turn to the works of St. Ephraem Syrus, who died a few years earlier, in 378. The word *hymni* in Egeria, which I have translated canticles, was probably a general term often applied to the Psalms, but inasmuch as it is sometimes distinguished from *psalmi* it must have extended to other metrical compositions. Now among the works of St. Ephraem published of late years by Mgr. Lamy, we have a number of his hymns on the Passion. St. Ephræm's hymns were celebrated all through the East, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that these, or others similar in character, supplied the very words which Egeria heard sung by the devout Christians of Jerusalem. Let us take a few specimens. For instance, St. Ephraem says of the Cenacle:

O blessed spot, thy narrow room may be set against all the world. That which is contained in thee, though bounded in narrow compass, filleth the universe. Blessed is the dwelling-place in which with holy hand the bread was broken. In thee the grape

[1] St. Jerome, Letter 46. Migne, *P.L.* vol. 22, p. 491.

which grew on Mary's vine, was crushed in the chalice of salvation.

Resp. Blessed is He whom His Holy Mysteries have proclaimed.

O blessed spot! No man hath seen nor shall see the things which thou hast seen. In thee the Lord Himself became true altar, priest, the bread and chalice of Salvation. He alone sufficeth for all, yet none for Him sufficeth. Altar He is and lamb, victim and sacrificer, priest as well as food.

It is in this strain, and at great length, that St. Ephraem apostrophizes the chamber of the Last Supper in his third hymn on the Passion. In the fourth, he passes to the Garden, and to other sites and things connected with the same subject:

1. O blessed spot, held worthy to drink in the sweat of the Son that fell on thee. The Son mingled His sweat with the ground that He might cast out the sweat of Adam who with sweat had tilled it. O blessed earth, that He renewed with His sweat! The earth that was sick was healed because He sweated. Who ever saw the sick ere this healed with the sweat of another?

. . . . . .

3. O blessed reed of mockery placed in the hand of our King. The wicked tormentors snatched at it, showing that with this reed was written the doom by which they were to be destroyed.

6. Blessed art thou, O little board (the title of the

Cross)! Upon thee they bent their eyes as upon the King's likeness. Thee too they nailed to the Cross with Him. The King Himself presented the image of death; but the little board, His likeness, was glorious with the purple of royalty. Thou wast not clothed in this outward semblance, but thou wast soaked through with the veiled likenesses of thy crucified King, so that thy outward form might speak of the beauties hidden within thee.[1]

These hymns, it seems to me, are very similar in tone to 'Come, let us stand beneath the Cross,' or to the poetical prose which is sometimes so severely criticized. But, perhaps even more plainly do we find the same spirit expressed in the Discourses. The seven 'Sermons for Holy Week' might all of them have been delivered as Passion sermons in the middle ages. I should not think of calling St. Ephraem's treatment of the theme 'morbid,' but he harps continually upon the notes of sympathy, compassion, and wonder at our Saviour's infinite condescension, dwelling with much insistence upon the physical suffering and the humiliations of the Cross. It is not easy to bring this home to the reader, for the impression is produced rather by the cumulative effect of the whole than by individual sentences. Still I hope I may be pardoned if I quote a few short passages. Speaking of the Crucifixion, he asks:

[1] S. Ephraem Syri, *Hymni et Sermones*. Ed Lamy, i. pp. 658–668.

Were all things in Heaven and on earth plunged in deepest grief, or did they rejoice that mankind was now redeemed? No (he replies) the grief must far have prevailed . . . There was no angel in Heaven that did not mourn, no creature on earth that was without pain, and, if the word had been given, they would have destroyed the house of Israel . . . It was at this hour that sorrow came upon all creation; every moment brought suffering upon Heaven and earth . . . What man would not be awe-stricken and be wholly plunged in grief that the children of Adam have given vinegar to drink to Him who is the fountain of life.[1]

'Glory be to Him, how much He suffered!' is an exclamation which from time to time bursts from the lips of the preacher at a breathing-space in his discourse. It is, however, from continuous passages that the general effect will best be appreciated. Take this description of the Scourging:

After many vehement outcries against Pilate, the all-mighty One was scourged like the meanest criminal. Surely there must have been commotion and horror at the sight. Let the heavens and earth stand awe-struck to behold Him who swayeth the rod of fire, Himself smitten with scourges, to behold Him who spread over the earth the veil of the skies and who set fast the foundations of the mountains, who poised the earth over the waters and sent down the blazing

[1] *Loc. cit.* pp. 493, 409, 511.

lightning-flash, now beaten by infamous wretches over a stone pillar that His own word had created. They, indeed, stretched out His limbs and outraged Him with mockeries. A man whom He had formed wielded the scourge. He, who sustains all creatures with His might, submitted His back to their stripes: He, who is the Father's right arm, yielded His own arms to be extended. The pillar of ignominy was embraced by Him who bears up and sustains the heaven and the earth in all their splendour. Savage dogs did bark at the Lord who with His thunder shakes the mountains; they sharpened their teeth against the Son of Glory.

How was it, Lord [he goes on], that these vile foxes could lay their grasp on Thee who art the lightning, and not be swept away like smoke before the wind? How was it that these unclean hands could touch Thy purity and not melt forthwith like wax before the fire? How did these fettered slaves enchain Thee? How did these bondsmen bind Thee fast, who settest loose the heaven and the earth, and dissolvest the mountains at a word?

The same strain is continued over several pages, and amongst other quaint fancies St. Ephraem remarks: 'The very column must have quivered as if it were alive, the cold stone must have felt that the Master was bound to it who had given it its being. The column shuddered, knowing that the Lord of all creatures was being scourged.' And he adds, as a marvel which was to be witnessed even to his own day, that the 'column

had contracted with fear beneath the Body of Christ.'

And all these expressions of deep feeling belong, be it remembered, to the fourth century, to the very epoch when the cross and the *labarum* first began to be publicly displayed. I am not disputing—no one can dispute—that the Cross has been to the Christians of every age an emblem of hope and of victory. In the very service of Good Friday itself, amidst all the signs of mourning, this note rings out gloriously in one of the noblest hymns of our liturgy, the *Vexilla Regis;* but nothing at the same time can be more untrue than to say that the aspect in which the early Christians '*invariably* viewed the Cross was that of triumph and exultation, of victory and of rapture.'

The same tone may be traced in the still earlier fragments of St. Melito of Sardis[1] (A.D. 150); but I prefer to direct attention to one of the most ancient monuments of literature in this country, the *Dream of the Holy Rood*, by the Northumbrian poet, Cynewulf, who lived in the eighth century.

1 See Cureton's *Spicilegium Syriacum*, p. 55. These fragments are accepted as genuine by Harnack and Preuschen, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur*, i. p. 252, and in the *Zeitschrift f. wissensch. Theologie*, 1888, p. 434. One passage concludes with these words: 'Ah! the fresh wickedness of the fresh murder! The Lord was exposed with a naked body. He was not deemed worthy even of covering; but in order that He might not be seen the lights were turned away and the day became dark because they were slaying God, who was naked upon the Tree.'

A portion of the poem is carved in runic characters upon the Ruthwell cross. The strangely modern feeling which breathes in this composition must strike every reader. The Holy Rood is represented as describing its own anguish when it bore the Saviour of the World. The Cross explains first, how it had grown to maturity at the edge of the wood, and how it was cut down to serve for a shameful purpose, a gibbet for evil-doers :[1]

Then mankind's Lord drew nigh,
With mighty courage hasting Him to mount on me and die ;
Though all earth shook, I durst not bend or break without His word ;
Firm I must stand, nor fall and crush the gazing foes abhorred.

Then the young Hero dighted Him ; Almighty God was He ;
Steadfast and very stout of heart mounted the shameful tree,
Brave in the sight of many there when man He fain would free.
I trembled while He clasped me round, yet groundward durst not bend,
I must not fall to lap of earth, but stand fast to the end.

[1] I quote from an excellent translation of this little poem made by Miss Emily Hickey, and published by the Catholic Truth Society.

A rood upreared, I lifted high the great King, Lord of Heaven ;
I durst not stoop ; they pierced me through with dark nails sharply driven ;
(The wounds are plain to see here yet, the open wounds that yawn,)
Yet nothing, nowise, durst I do of scathe to any one.
They put us both to shame, us twain. I was all wet with blood
Shed from His side when He had sent His spirit forth to God.

I cannot quote the whole of this charming poem, but must refer the reader to the original. The four lines following, however, are too noteworthy in their Catholic spirit to be passed over.

Lo, then, the Prince of Glory, He did greatly honour me :
The Lord of Heaven did set me high o'er every forest-tree.
E'en as His Mother, Mary's self, Almighty God had mind
To honour in the sight of men, above all womankind.

CHAPTER X

Holy Saturday

It is, I think, something of a reproach to modern English Catholics that the attendance at the service of Holy Saturday morning is usually so scanty. Of course it is easy to understand that the length of the ceremonies and the dreariness of the prophecies act rather as a deterrent, but when we come to remember that this function represents what was for many ages almost the very greatest celebration of the year, it seems that a mere feeling of *ennui* ought not to frighten us away from a rite both historically and devotionally so interesting. No more becoming preparation for our Easter festival could well be found than that which the Church has herself provided in expectation of the coming of the Lord.[1] As the author of *Lyra Liturgica* sings of this vigil:

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[1] It was a tradition among the early Christians, as St. Jerome amongst others bears witness, that Christ would come again on the night of the great pasch, as the destroying angel had visited the earth on that night. For this reason they kept watch on the

I know, O Lord, that Thou art near to-day;
These blessings, which around Thy presence throng,
Are heralds sure, that come to clear Thy way,
And chant the prelude of our Easter song.

General Conception of the Saturday Office

In order to understand the Holy Saturday services the one thing we have to fix indelibly upon our minds is that we are assisting at a night-vigil, not that belonging to the night between Good Friday and Holy Saturday, but that of the night which precedes the dawn of Easter. This, I grant, requires rather an effort of the imagination. It is difficult to persuade oneself at eight o'clock on Saturday morning that the sun has already set, that our watch is nearly over, that more than twenty-four hours have elapsed since our Blessed Lord was laid in the Tomb. That is, however, the effort of the imagination which the Church requires us to make. Of course originally the service did not begin until the evening. Even as late as the ninth or tenth century it is expressly stipulated by liturgical writers that the *Gloria in*

eve of Easter-day, that they might be found waiting when He came. *Est enim*, they said, *phase, id est transitus Domini*, 'For it is the Phase, that is the passage of the Lord.' This night-watch of Easter eve, which St. Augustine calls the mother of all holy vigils, was copied first of all on all Saturdays in anticipation of Sunday, which was the weekly commemoration of the great Sunday, and eventually extended to every night in the year. From this arose finally the Matins of the Divine Office.

excelsis should not be sung until the stars had begun to appear, while in primitive times it would seem that the service was later still, and lasted almost until dawn on Easter Sunday.

As I have already said, it was the aim of the early Christians, in accordance with what they conceived to be our Lord's own warning, to see that at the moment of His revisiting the earth they should all be found watching. Hence the vigil or night-watch of Easter, upon which tradition declared that our Saviour would come again, was considered as the most solemn of all the vigils of the year. We learn from many authorities of the extraordinary splendour with which it was celebrated, when once the Church had emerged from the Catacombs and was free to perform her worship in public. Of the Emperor Constantine we are told that he 'transformed the night of the sacred vigil into the brilliancy of day, by lighting throughout the whole city pillars of wax, while burning lamps illuminated every part, so that this mystic vigil was rendered brighter than the brightest daylight.'[1] In similar terms St. Gregory Nazianzen describes this vigil as a universal holiday, in which all, high and low, took part, and kept up the illumination until dawn;[2] and St. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of this 'radiant night, which links the

[1] Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini*, iv. 22.
[2] Orat. 42, *In Pasch.* 2.

splendour of burning lamps to the morning rays of the sun, and makes one long uninterrupted day without any break of darkness.'[1]

So in the West also the day was highly honoured. There can be no reasonable doubt that the Christian poet Prudentius, who died in A.D. 405, has left us a description of the Easter vigil in the concluding stanzas of his poem *Ad incensum lucernæ*, At the Lighting of the Lamp.

In festive joys we spend the night,
Holy our pleasures, psalms and hymns and vows.
Our wakeful prayers with mutual counsel are combined,
The sanctuary with holy gifts is piled.

Lights from the ceiling hang by flexile cords,
Whose glittering blaze spangles the fretted roof;
Cherished and fed with oil by floating wicks,
Bright shines the flame through the translucent glass.

Sooth might you say the starry sky,
Studded with trions twain, stands overhead;
The Northern Wain holds on his steadfast course,
And Hesperos sheds abroad his purple light.[2]

Now on this sacred vigil there were two great things to be done. In the first place the faithful there gathered together were to commemorate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; and secondly,

1 Orat. 4. *In Resurr. Domini.*

2 I borrow with some slight changes the unrhymed translation of Mr. G. Morison.

partly as a sort of figure of that Resurrection, many of the catechumens who had been tried by a long apprenticeship and had been found worthy to bear the name of Christ were to receive the grace of Holy Baptism. It was no doubt in great measure owing to the circumstances under which it was received, as well as to the effect of the Sacrament upon the soul, that Baptism was universally spoken of among the early Christians as φωτισμός, 'the illumination,' and the baptized were called φωτισθέντες, *illuminati*, 'the illuminated.'

In order to carry into effect the first and more important of these ideas, to realize, that is, the Resurrection of our Lord, various ceremonies were gradually adopted, and amongst these the most conspicuous was the blessing of the *paschal candle*. In this case we have, I believe, a ceremony that was really designed from the beginning with a strictly mystical and symbolical meaning. There are not many such, but I fancy that this is one of them.[1] The paschal candle was not, as it has been pretended, merely an exceptionally large candle which was used at the vigil of Easter-eve because the watching was longer than usual. It was intended amongst the early Jewish Christians, a people who like other oriental races clothed all their thought in figures and parables, that this great light should typify Him who is the

[1] See an excellent article by Dom U. Berlière, in the *Revue Bénédictine*, 1888, p. 107.

'*True Light* which cometh into this world,' Him in whose light, the catechumens that evening to be 'illuminated,' were to participate. He was the great Light, their little flame was only derived from Him. In what more speaking way could the *Resurrection* be represented than as a 'blaze of light' — *Lumen ad revelationem gentium*, 'A light for the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel'?

What was more, according to their conception, He had chiefly given efficacy to the waters of Baptism by first descending into the Jordan and receiving Baptism from His precursor. It was on this occasion that the heavens opened, and the dove, symbolical of grace, descended upon Him and upon the water. And so, as far back as we can trace the blessing of the font, we find that in a most public and solemn way the Bishop plunged into it the paschal candle lighted with the new fire. To plunge this candle, which was the type of our Saviour, into the water of the font which was being blessed for the general Baptism of catechumens following immediately afterwards, was only to re-enact, in a figure whose meaning was patent to all, the Baptism of our Blessed Lord. It hardly needed the words, *Descendat in hanc plenitudinem fontis virtus Spiritus Sancti*— 'May the power of the Holy Spirit come down into the fulness of this fountain' —to recall to the minds of the spectators how the Holy Ghost had come down in the form of a

dove when Jesus Christ was baptized in the waters of the Jordan, while the triple immersion of the candle was a natural emblem of the Blessed Trinity, to those who were accustomed to see the catechumens plunged three several times into the water, as the words were spoken : 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father ✠ and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy ✠ Ghost.' And so it was not surprising that the writers of the middle ages should work out in detail, according to their wont, the points of resemblance between type and antitype, between lighted pillars of wax and the person of Christ our Lord. Indeed, it may be said that the figure lends itself in many respects with peculiar appropriateness to the elaboration of this comparison. Already the *Exsultet* itself reminds us how : 'This [fire], though it be divided, yet loseth it not anything in the communication of its light, feeding itself from the melted wax, which the bee hath produced to make the substance of this precious torch.'[1] Even in such wise Christ could give Himself to be the light and life of many human souls, and yet remain in Himself entire and unchanged. Similarly the wax of which the candle was formed, suggested to mediæval minds a vivid image of the virginal conception of our Blessed Lady, to whom there is explicit reference in many older forms of

[1] I have used here and occasionally elsewhere the translation of the first English Holy Week book—that edited in 1670 and again in 1687 by Sir Walter Kirkham Blount.

the *Exsultet*. The bee's singular privilege of chastity was a legend universally accepted in the middle ages, and supported by no less authority than that of the pagan poet Virgil. Hence the clean wax of which the candle was made, typified the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ, which He had taken from the most pure substance of His Virgin Mother. No wonder that the pious thought of the early rubricians went on to recognize in the wick of the candle an image of the human soul of Christ, without which His sacred flesh was inert and lifeless, and to see in the blessed flame which crowned it a figure of the Divine Personality of the Word, coming down from heaven to give life to the world. Whether this flame was the new fire 'struck from the veins of flint,' from the rock which was Christ, as the present ceremonial prescribes, or whether, as we learn was the custom amongst Teutonic peoples in the ninth century, the fire literally came from heaven, being obtained from the heat of the sun's rays through a burning glass, or whether, as in the oldest forms of the Roman ritual, the light was that hidden and mystically buried with our Saviour on Good Friday, the singular aptness of the symbolism in each case need hardly be insisted upon. That the candle should be lighted at intervals from Easter to Ascension Day, and that it should have imbedded in it five grains of incense, emblematic of the five Sacred Wounds, which St. Thomas was bidden to touch and

examine, as the precious jewels which marked that glorified Body, was only a development of the idea identifying this paschal light with the risen life of our Saviour. Taking it all in all there is perhaps no more perfect specimen of Christian symbolism to be found in the whole of Catholic liturgy than that of the paschal candle.

This then is the key of the whole of the morning office of Holy Saturday, which gradually, through the increasing infirmity or apathy of the clergy and the faithful, has come to be celebrated at a more and more early hour, until it is now an early service for Saturday morning instead of a night-watch upon Easter-eve. The liturgy still plainly indicates the old practice. *Hæc igitur nox est*, 'This then is the night,' are words frequently repeated in the course of the blessing of the paschal candle, the *Exsultet* as it is called; and if any one will examine in his Holy Week book the Preface and *Communicantes* of the Mass for Holy Saturday, and compare them with those for Easter Sunday, he will notice that the only difference between the two is, that the words *in hac nocte*, 'on this night,' found in the former are replaced in the latter by *in hac die*, 'on this day.'

And now with this amount of insight into the general conception which dominates the whole, let us turn to the details of this long service.

The Blessing of the New Fire

This rite, with which the service on Holy Saturday begins, takes place in the church porch, or by preference outside in the open air. It may very well be that in the early middle ages, when these customs first took shape, the business of obtaining a light from flint and steel and getting a charcoal fire to burn was a troublesome affair attended by a good deal of smoke. This obviously was better done out of doors than in the sanctuary. It has already been said that the blessing of the fire as now prescribed in the Missal was not of Roman origin, but seems to have been borrowed from some Frankish or Celtic source. The Roman plan was to hide the fire on Good Friday as an image of the death of Christ. The candle kindled from that flame was a most eloquent type of the Resurrection. One other way of obtaining the new fire which was practised in Germany, as we learn from a letter of St. Boniface, was by the use of lenses or burning glasses. It may be noticed that this method also must almost necessarily have been used out of doors. The blessing-prayers, with one exception, to be noticed later, present no special feature of interest. I will only add that the older liturgists, who are never at a loss for mystical interpretations of ceremonies, remark that the fire being struck from the flint tells us that Jesus Christ, typified by the flint ('Now the rock was Christ'), is

the distinction of Persons in the Blessed Trinity, a distinction so forcibly recalled to mind in the formula of Baptism, but this explanation was no doubt invented after the fact. It is possible that the triple candle is in some way connected with the taper carried upon a reed, of which we hear on Maundy Thursday in the first Roman *Ordo;* and a passage in the English *Concordia Regularis* suggests that the triple form may have resulted from an older custom of procuring such new fire on three distinct days. But the true explanation is probably to be found in the wish to provide against the possible emergency of the precious fire, so newly kindled and blessed, being extinguished by a sudden puff of wind. The *Exsultet* miniature roughly sketched on p. 419, further on, shows a reed with a *double* candle-flame, and the Sarum Consuetudinary (c. 1210), says: 'Let the candle upon the reed [or rather spear (*hasta*)—it had a serpent-shaped head and a sharp point] be lighted, and let another candle be lighted at the same time, so that the candle upon the reed can be rekindled if it should chance to be blown out.' The provision made by the three intertwined tapers of the Roman rite was probably not found excessive in the draughty churches of the middle ages.

In our present ritual the procession moves forward in silence; but according to the Sarum rubric a very beautiful hymn was sung on the way—*Inventor rutili*. Here are the two first stanzas:

Thou leader kind, whose word called forth the radiant light,
Who by set bounds dividest night and day,
When the sun set, in gloom rose chaos on our sight.
Give back, O Christ, Thy light, Thy servants pray.

Although with countless stars and with the silvery tint
Of lunar lamp, Thou dost the heavens dye,
Yet dost Thou teach us how by sudden stroke of flint
The rock-born seed of light to vivify.

The Blessing of the Paschal Candle

When, after the triple *Lumen Christi*, the procession finally reaches the sanctuary, the deacon, still clad in his white dalmatic, asks the blessing of the celebrant as he would do before the Gospel. Then making his way to a lectern or pulpit beside the paschal candle he incenses the book and begins to chant that magnificent eucharistic prayer known from its first word as the *Exsultet*. From every point of view, whether we consider the antiquity of the rite, the composition of the prayer, or the music to which it is sung, this is one of the most striking chants in all the Church's liturgy. No one who has ever heard it adequately rendered can lose the memory of its majestic cadences. 'This truly great composition,' says a competent musical critic, Mr. W. M. Rockstro, 'is universally acknowledged to be the finest specimen of plainsong we possess.' He adds, however: 'It is of

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so great a length that few ecclesiastics are able to sing it throughout without a change of pitch, which is fatal to the perfection of its effect.' As for its antiquity, it has been recently shown that the rite is unquestionably as old as the time of St. Jerome,[1] and that it was already in the year 384 widely spread throughout the Christian world. We learn further that then as now it was the privilege of the deacon to sing it, and that although a considerable liberty was left to him to improvise and choose his own wording,[2] the composition never diverged much from the general conception with which we are now familiar. There seems no good reason to believe, as has been asserted, that the *Exsultet*, as we may read it in our Holy Week books, was actually composed by St. Augustine, but it unquestionably dates from that period and is not unworthy of such a writer.

In some parts of Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, more especially in Italy, there was a practice of using splendidly illuminated manuscripts or rolls which contained the *Exsultet* alone and were displayed only on this one day in all the year. The deacon sang from the pulpit or ambo, beside which in many Italian churches the paschal candlestick of marble or bronze is

[1] See *Revue Bénédictine*, Jan. 1891, and Sep. 1892. Cf. *The Month*, April 1896, where I have given references to various modern descriptions of certain *Exsultet* Rolls.

[2] Cf. The Palm Sunday Preface in Azevedo's *Liturgia Romana Vetus*.

immovably fixed. As the deacon proceeded in his chanting, he allowed the loose end of the roll

THE DEACON SINGING THE 'EXSULTET' FROM THE AMBO.
(An illumination in an 'Exsultet' Roll of the eleventh century; copied from Agincourt.)

to fall over the pulpit, so as to hang before the eyes of the faithful gathered below. From this

practice the curious arrangement has resulted that all the illuminations in these rolls are drawn upside down with respect to the text which they illustrate. The pictures are so painted that when the roll is hanging over the rail of the pulpit the illustrations may be seen the right way up by the congregation below. Some of the scenes depicted on these rolls represent the chanting of the *Exsultet* itself, and it is interesting to note in them the gaily ornamented candlestick, the dress of the deacon and celebrant, and the people studying the pictures as the deacon chanting above unwinds the illuminated text.

Any one who reads the text of the *Exsultet* in the Holy Week book will see that it affords plenty of scope for illustration. The prayer touches upon a very great variety of topics—the victory of Christ our King rising from the dead, the joy of 'Mother Church,' the symbolism of the candle itself, the night of the first Pasch when Israel went out of Egypt and Pharao and his hosts were overwhelmed in the Red Sea, the 'happy fault' of our forefather Adam, 'which deserved to have such and so great a Redeemer,'[1] the bees which

[1] 'O certe necessarium Adæ peccatum, O felix culpa, quæ talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem.' There was a considerable difference of opinion in the middle ages as to the propriety of this bold language. St. Hugh of Cluny ordered the words to be effaced in his Missal, and in many early MSS. of the *Exsultet* we find that they have either been omitted or crossed through. The Church, by retaining them in the Roman Missal, has tacitly pronounced that they may bear a perfectly legitimate acceptation.

produced the wax from which the candle is made, the Pope and the Emperor for whom prayer is offered, etc. This 'pillar of wax,' it was suggested, was a memorial of that pillar of fire and cloud which went before the people of Israel and in the guise of which the Lord made Himself their leader.

The Grains of Incense

While the paschal candle is thus being consecrated, the deacon two or three times interrupts his chanting for a few moments in order to fix in the candle the grains of incense which had been blessed along with the fire at the church porch, to light it from the triple taper on the reed, and to light the lamps. The grains of incense, considered, as said above, to typify the five Wounds in our Saviour's glorified Body, require a few words of comment.

Taking this portion of the ritual as an accomplished fact, it would be a singularly unpoetical and matter-of-fact mind which could find this addition to the rite of the paschal candle either extravagant or inappropriate. It was a beautiful thought to introduce these five jewels of sweet-smelling incense, emblematic of prayer and incorruption, so that they might form a cross upon the column which signifies our Lord's risen Body. And yet it seems clear that in this case, as in many others among the ceremonies of the Church,

accident, or rather a positive blunder, has led to the adoption of the rite. There is nothing irreverent or un-Catholic in the belief that in all such matters Divine Providence has watched over the action of clergy and faithful, and that by the operation of natural causes those ceremonies have been introduced or retained which were in themselves fitted to lend beauty to God's external worship. Such at least I believe to have been the case in this instance.

The five grains of incense are fixed in the paschal candle when the deacon arrives at the words of the *Exsultet—Suscipe, Sancte Pater, incensi hujus sacrificium vespertinum*—words which are translated in the Holy Week book I have before me, 'Receive, O holy Father, the evening sacrifice of this incense.' But if we examine the passage which follows, it seems clear that the word *incensi* does not mean 'incense,' but simply 'this lighted [candle],' for we are told it is an 'oblation made of the work of bees,' and there is nothing in the context at this point which suggests any allusion to precious gums. Again, if the reader will examine the prayer which is assigned earlier, in the same Office of Holy Saturday, to the blessing of the grains of incense, he will find a form which is clearly intended, not for incense, but for light or fire: *Hunc nocturnum splendorem, Deus, invisibilis regenerator accende*, etc.—'Enkindle, O God, this nocturnal radiance by an invisible regeneration, that the sacrifice which

this night we offer may shine afar with the mysterious admixture of Thy own Light.' And if the language of the prayer were not in itself sufficient, we might turn to the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, where we should find the same prayer placed after the *laus cerei* with a rubric preceding, which makes it seem evident that it was intended to bless not incense, but the candle itself.

It would be easy to illustrate, if there were need, this use of the word *incensus* absolutely for a lighted candle, and the confusion between *hic incensus* and *hoc incensum* must have been both ancient and widespread, for we find Cassian, in the fifth century, evidently misunderstanding the *hora incensi* of the Vulgate in St. Luke's Gospel and taking it to be the equivalent of Prudentius' *ad incensum lucernæ*, the hour of Vespers.

And so, the reader may say, the introduction of the grains of incense is simply a modern blunder—a clumsy excrescence upon a venerable rite. Well, I answer, in some sense a blunder certainly, but by no means a modern one. A blunder over a thousand years old is likely to have something to recommend it for its own sake. If it had been a mere blunder, it would probably have perished a short time after it came into existence, without spreading beyond the corner of the world in which it originated. As it is, it has been adopted by the Universal Church, and the symbolism which pious and learned teachers have attached to the grains of incense has won acceptance and

awakened devotion wherever men were found devout and intelligent enough to appreciate its beauty. The blunder, I say, is a thousand years old, for in the Pontifical of Archbishop Egbert of York, who died in 760, we find a prayer which seems unmistakably meant for incense, seeing that it speaks of sweet odours and perfumes, with this rubric : ' The blessing of the incense on Holy Saturday before you bless the candle, and you ought to put it into the candle at the place where the words occur, *Suscïpe incensi.*'[1]

The Prophecies

And now we come to what I fear many good Catholics consider a very wearisome portion of the

[1] I may confess, that despite the high authority of Mgr. Duchesne, upon whose comments my remarks were originally founded (see *Christian Worship*, p. 255), I do not feel so confident now about the existence of the 'blunder,' as when I first wrote on the subject. A certain quantity of wax seems sometimes to have been used to burn the incense. So we find in the *Ordo Romanus* (Muratori, *Lit. Rom.*, ii. p. 1,004), that the Agnus Deis, which were made in part out of the paschal candle, were distributed to the people on Low Sunday. *Et ex eis faciunt in domos suas incensum ad suffumigandum pro qualicunque eis eveniente necessitate.* From a Sarum Ordinal quoted by Rock (MS. Harleian, 1,001), it would seem that the deacon, at the words, *Suscipe Sancte Pater incensi hujus sacrificium vespertinum* of the *Exsultet*, took a small quantity of wax from the candle, and burnt it in the thurible before fixing the grains of incense in their place. It is not easy to construe the passage, which runs thus : ' Ponat ipse diaconus incensum in thuribulo tantummodo cereum, et postea quinque grana incensi, que ab executore officii fuerint sanctificata atque benedicta postquam novus ignis benedicendus fuerit, firmiter in ipso cereo infigat in modum crucis.' Again, in the early rituals for the dedication of a church, we hear of a cross of kindled grains of incense : while twelfth century writers speak of a ' candelam vitream plenam incenso ' (Mabillon, *Museum Italicum*, ii. 150). But the subject cannot be adequately discussed here.

service, the reading of the Prophecies. They are usually spoken of as the Prophecies, though they do not all belong to the prophetical books, but the passages have some indirect reference at least to the coming Messiah, and they are read without any heading to say whence they are taken. After each Prophecy *Flectamus genua* is said with its response, and then a Collect. To these collects we should do well to turn for an explanation of the spiritual fruit which the Church wishes us to obtain from that particular reading. After the twelfth Prophecy, that which narrates the history of Nabuchodonosor and the children thrown into the fiery furnace, *Flectamus genua* is not said. It has been suggested that the genuflection is omitted here because the sun would by this time have set and because it would have been considered unlawful to kneel after the eve of the Sunday had fairly begun.[1] On the other hand the rubricians, even from an early date, explain the omission of the *Flectamus genua* by referring to the story of the three children which has just been read, who refused to bow the knee before the statue which King Nabuchodonosor had set up.

[1] From a very early age, as Tertullian bears witness, the Christians were accustomed to pray standing on Sundays and in paschal time. We still retain a trace of this in the rubric commonly observed for kneeling or standing in the recitation of the Angelus, or of the antiphons of Our Lady. It is important to notice that throughout paschal time *Flectamus genua* is never said. Thus, as a reference to the Missal will show, it does not even appear amid the prophecies on the Vigil of Pentecost.

It seems difficult to decide between these two rival theories. On the one hand it is certainly noteworthy that on the Saturday of the ember-days the last lesson of those read at Mass is never followed by *Flectamus genua ;* on the other hand it is curious that although the lesson read in these cases does not explicitly mention the refusal of the three children to worship the statue, it is taken from a later portion of the same chapter of Daniel, and is still concerned with the story of the three children. It is a natural inference that the extract read was originally much longer and was the same for the vigil and the ember-days alike. In both cases a curtailment has probably taken place. On the Easter vigil the earlier portion has been retained, on the ember Saturdays a later fragment of the same pericope.

If this supposition be correct, it would follow that the Prophecies, tedious as they may still seem when read on Holy Saturday morning, must have occupied a considerably longer space of time in the liturgy of the seventh and eighth centuries, and this without taking account of the practice which at one time prevailed at Rome of reading them both in Latin and in Greek.

There are many other questions of interest which are suggested by these Prophecies, but they cannot be discussed here. In many Holy Week books it is asserted that these portions of the Old Testament were read exclusively for the bene-

fit of the catechumens, to teach them the history of God's dispensations under the old law before they were initiated themselves into the still closer covenant of the New Testament through the sacrament of baptism. This theory, however, does not seem probable. It is much more likely that we possess in this portion of the service a survival of the most primitive form of vigil, preserved here without substantial change from the very earliest Christian ages.[1] The psalms, it is true, which no doubt originally separated groups of these lessons, just as they now separate the lessons of our actual matins, have been omitted, while other elements have been added before and after. But there is every reason to recognize the stamp of a most primitive age in these lessons without heading or benediction, each followed by the *Oremus*, the *Flecta nus genua* and a prayer, and with a responsory at the conclusion of each set of three, sung to a more figured chant. That these prophecies had no essential connexion with the instruction of the catechumens, but were simply intended to open the minds and hearts of the whole assembly to the new creation typified in the Easter mystery, may fairly be inferred from the fact that this portion of the service is still retained even in churches which have no baptismal font.[2]

1 See Battiffol, *Histoire du Bréviaire*, p. 114.

2 There would seem to be reason for believing that the present arrangement of the Prophecies must be assigned to St. Gregory the

The Blessing of the Font and the Baptism of Catechumens

To the font then we have next to turn. On the conclusion of the Prophecies the clergy make their way thither in procession, the celebrant vested in a purple cope and the deacon and subdeacon in purple chasubles. On the way the tract is sung *Sicut desiderat cervus*, 'As the stag panteth after the water springs,' etc. It is curious to note how constantly our old fonts, not to speak of the paintings in the catacombs at a still earlier date, are decorated with representations of stags, undoubtedly suggested by the application to the sacrament of baptism of these verses of the 41st Psalm. It is also an interesting fact that in the natural history lore universally current throughout the middle ages a curious belief was maintained in the enmity between the serpent and the stag. The stag, it was gravely asserted, always pursued and devoured the serpent, and when it had eaten it, it hastened to counteract the poison it had swallowed by slaking its thirst at a neighbouring spring. We can trace this idea as far back as the time of St. Jerome, and knowing as we do, how universally the serpent was identified with the spirit of evil, it is easy to understand that the stag should be accepted, in the

Great. Ælfric in his letter remarks with emphasis that they are to be read 'secundum constitutionem Sti. Gregorii Papæ cum tractibus et collectis.' (*Winchester Obedientiary Rolls*, p. 188.)

symbolical language of the Church, as a very striking figure of the Christian neophyte.[1]

On arriving at the baptistry, the font is solemnly blessed with a sort of Preface,—in other words an eucharistic prayer, like the *Exsultet* employed in the consecration of the paschal candle, though the chant to which it is sung is not the same. The reader would do well to study it carefully. The main idea which runs through both the language of the prayer and the symbolical ceremonies with which it is accompanied, is that of a new spiritual creation in which the priest in some sense recalls and enacts the part of the Almighty Creator at the beginning of the world. In this laver of regeneration, indeed, the world is to be renewed, the Spirit of God is once more to be borne upon the waters, they are to be separated from all earthly taint of evil, they are to be a fourfold river of life, spreading from paradise to the four quarters of the globe, converted by God's power from bitterness to sweetness, welling up from the rock to give drink to the thirsty people, recalling finally the miracles of the Saviour, and drawing their efficacy from the stream of His sacred side. Furthermore the paschal candle is solemnly plunged three times into the font

[1] There is a most curious font of very high antiquity described by Paciaudi, the sculptures on the panels of which represent the exorcism and other ceremonies preliminary to baptism. At the ends and in sundry vacant spaces there have been carved representations of stags and serpents.

as a most vivid image of the sacramental efficacy given to the flood of the Jordan by the baptism of Christ, and the oil of catechumens and chrism is poured into these sacred waters to sanctify them and to symbolize their richness and fecundity.

In reference to what has just been said about the celebrant in some sense impersonating the Eternal Father, it should be noted that in blessing the font he three times touches or divides the water with his right hand, and that he breathes upon the water in the form of the Greek letter ψ, to symbolize, no doubt, the descent of the Holy Spirit. In this connexion the fragment of early Christian art reproduced opposite has a special interest. The right hand of God the Father and the dove as an emblem of the Holy Ghost are unmistakable. I am inclined to see in the cup, beneath the dove's beak, a representation of the chrism, and in the female figure with the robes a type of the Church. That the scene represents the baptism of our Saviour, rather than that of some typical catechumen, does not seem certain.[1]

After the consecration of the font, but before the infusion of the oils, some of its contents are taken through the church, in accordance with a very ancient Christian custom, to sprinkle the congregation and to be used in blessing the dwellings of the faithful.

In the early centuries this ceremony just de-

[1] See Kraus, *Realencyclopädie*, s.v. 'Taufe.'

IVORY PANEL OF THE SIXTH CENTURY REPRESENTING THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST. (*See p.* 430.)

(*From the Original at the British Museum, reproduced from the 'Guide to Christian Antiquities,' by the kind permission of Mr. C. H. Read.*)

[*To face p.* 430.

scribed was succeeded by the greatest of all the events of the Easter vigil, the baptism of catechumens. When paganism was still rife and the Church numbered her converts by hundreds and thousands, long hours were often spent in the solemn administration of this sacrament. For many weeks before, as we have seen in a previous chapter, the greatest care had been taken in preparing the neophytes. The 'scrutinies' had been held, occasions which to this day have left their mark upon the liturgy, in order to make a selection among the candidates and exclude such as were not steadfast and earnest. The Creed and the Our Father and certain psalms had been taught them, and at the 'Repetition of the Creed,' *in redditione symboli*, they had shown that the instruction given them had been understood and retained. The exorcisms also had been already performed, and the rite of the *aperitio aurium* and the *ephpheta*, the opening of the ears and the loosening of the tongue. All these ceremonies, assigned to different days, had, as we have seen, formed a striking feature in the last three weeks of Lent. It will not be supposed, therefore, that so much remained to be done for each individual catechumen, as has now to be gone through even in an infant baptism. None the less the immersion in the font, the pronouncing of the sacramental words, the distribution of the tapers, and the clothing of the neophytes in their white garments must have occupied long hours, so that,

in the early ages at least, it must surely have been long past midnight, before the white-robed army of the newly baptized accompanied the procession back through the church to take up their places for this brief season within the sanctuary itself. As the author of *Lyra Liturgica* sings of the font and the neophytes of that holy night,

Of old, an Angel-visitant
With healing virtue came
To bless Bethesda's pool—the haunt
Of maim'd and blind and lame.

A Guest than Angel mightier far
Hath visited this place,
Whose hand shall loose the envious bar
That locks the stream of grace.

E'en now, ere Christ have burst the grave,
His neophytes are nigh,
To show that He who died to save,
Shall rise to justify.

Beside the sepulchre they wait,
Their souls all clean and bright;
As did these Angels near the gate,
Clad in their robes of white.

In the middle ages it was still the custom to baptize some few infants during the service on Holy Saturday. John Myrc in his *Liber Festivalis* speaks thus:

In the beginning all children abode [waited] to be christened unto those two days [Easter eve and Whitsun eve], and to be christened at the font hallowing. But now, for by cause that [for reason that] many in so long abiding were dead without christendom [baptism], therefore holy Church ordained to now christen all times of the year ; save eight days before these eves the child shall abide to the font hallowing, if it may without peril of death, or else not.

It may be interesting to quote the further remarks of the same writer, who represents faithfully the ideas of his time on this subject.

In the font hallowing the priest casteth water in four parts of the font, for Christ bade His disciples going, preach and teach in the four parts of Christendom, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And after, the priest breatheth on the water, for the Holy Ghost in making of the world was borne upon the waters. For when God, for Adam's sin, cursed the earth and the land, he cursed not the water ; wherefore it is lawful for a man to eat in Lent that which cometh of the water. After, he droppeth into the water the wax of a candle burning ; the which betokeneth the manhood of Christ that was fulled [baptized] in water ; and putteth oil and cream [i.e. chrism] in the water. . . Then from the font, the people go to the choir singing the litany, praying all the saints in heaven to pray to God to give to all that be christened, to keep worthily that sacrament to God's pleasure, and the covenant that they have made in their christening.

The Litany

After the blessing of the font the procession according to our modern rubric returns to the sanctuary. There the sacred ministers prostrate themselves upon the altar steps, and then and only then two cantors begin to chant the Litany of the Saints, repeating each invocation twice over. The celebrant with the deacon and subdeacon remain prostrate until the latter portion of the litany is reached, when at the phrase, *Peccatores te rogamus audi nos*, they rise and withdraw to the sacristy to vest for Mass. In the usage accordingly which now prevails it would seem that the fundamental idea of the litany has been somewhat lost sight of. The litany is originally and primarily a processional prayer; indeed the word *litania* was at one time used as synonymous with *processio*. From the *Gelasian Sacramentary* it would appear that three different litanies used to be sung during the Holy Saturday service, one in coming to the altar before the blessing of the paschal candle, another on the way to the blessing of the font, the third on returning from the font to the sanctuary. Similar litanies, in which the invocations were repeated not twice but three, five and seven times according to the length of the way, seem always to have been sung in the procession to the station. What is more, it is extremely probable that the *Kyrie eleison*, etc., now said at the beginning of Mass,

is nothing more than a survival of these old litanies. In any case it is very significant that here in this service of Holy Saturday, as again in that of Whitsun eve, where the full litany has immediately preceded, the *Kyrie* of the Mass is supplied by the *Kyrie* of the litany. So again, even in the Ordination Mass, where the litany was chanted after the Gradual, the *Kyrie* was formerly omitted from its usual place. That the litany should not begin until the ministers have prostrated themselves before the altar was a practice which probably only arose after the original conception of the litany as a processional prayer was forgotten. It would seem to have been the custom for the pontiff on arriving at the altar steps to prostrate himself, as has already been noticed in the chapter on Good Friday. During this prostration it will often have happened that the litany had not yet been completed. In this way a connexion was probably established between the prostration and the singing of the litany, which became in time much closer than the primitive usage warranted. It may be noticed also that the Holy Saturday Mass like the service of Good Friday possesses no Introit.

The Mass

The Mass of Holy Saturday has several very interesting peculiarities which can only be touched upon briefly. Most of them are to be explained by the fact that the Mass which is now sung on

Holy Saturday morning was not originally a Mass for Holy Saturday at all, but coming at the end of the long ceremonies of the great vigil, was in reality the midnight Mass of Easter Sunday. Probably in the earliest stage of the celebration this point was not reached until long after midnight, when the day was already beginning to break. There was every reason then why the joyous exultation of the Resurrection should find its first expression there. Theoretically Holy Saturday, like Good Friday, was an 'aliturgical' day, a day without a Mass. Even now only one Mass is said, at which Holy Communion is not distributed, but it carries with it all that sudden transformation of mourning into gladness which befits the commemoration of the actual moment of the resurrection from the dead. Hence it is that at the *Gloria* of Holy Saturday the bells are rung, the organ peals forth, the statues and pictures are uncovered, and a few moments afterwards the glad alleluias, silenced for nine weeks past, are heard again in jubilant tones, soaring in their triple repetition higher and higher until they seem to mingle with the songs of the angels in heaven.

The practice of ringing the bells during the *Gloria* may be traced back to the time of St. Æthelwold. By him it is associated with the lighting of candles and lamps, and he enjoins that the choirmaster or master of ceremonies (*magister scholæ*), just before the *Gloria*, is to

give the signal to those present by crying aloud, *Accendite*, 'Light up.' It is very probably to this illumination, augmented originally by the presence in the sanctuary of the neophytes, each holding aloft his baptismal taper, as well as to the paschal candle, that we may trace the ancient rubric dispensing with the carrying of lights at the Gospel on this day.

The remaining peculiarities of the Holy Saturday Mass seem to me to be best explained on the theory that at the period when it assumed its present form the faithful did not communicate at that Mass, but deferred their Communion until the later or Easter Mass properly so called. To this cause I think we owe it that the Holy Saturday Mass has no Offertory, no kiss of peace,[1] and no Communion—I refer to the antiphon denoted by that name. The *Credo* and the *Agnus Dei* do not appear, because they are of late institution. The Vespers in a contracted form were introduced at the end of the Mass of the Easter vigil, because the service itself prevented their being recited at the normal hour, and they were inserted just before the concluding prayer of the Mass in order, as St. Æthelwold's *Regularis Concordia* informs us, that the priest may round off (*compleat*) both the Vesper office and the Mass itself by one and the same prayer.

[1] It is very noteworthy that in the *Regularis Concordia* St. Æthelwold says that the kiss of peace is not given on Holy Saturday *except by those who communicate* (Logeman, *Anglia*, vol. xiii. p. 425).

In the foregoing account many interesting points concerning the Paschal candle have necessarily been passed over. Much, for instance, might have been said about the practice of lighting the candle at the words *rutilans ignis accendit*—a rubric which has originated simply in a misunderstanding of the words. All the most venerable service-books represent the candle as lighted at the very beginning, and the illuminations in many of the Exsultet-rolls quite confirm this idea. Much also might be added on the practice of inscribing the date and other particulars of the calendar upon the candle or on a small plate which was fixed in it—a custom observed in Rome, on the testimony of Venerable Bede, in the year 701. I will add only one brief word on the imposing size which these candles have assumed not only in Italy, where the candlesticks are frequently made of marble, and are regarded as adjuncts of the pulpit, but in England also and in Spain.[1] Thus at Durham, just before the Reformation, we are told of a magnificent erection with dragons, and shields representing the four Evangelists, and

> crystall stones . . . with curious anticke worke, as beasts and men upon horseback, with bucklers, bowes and shafts and knotts, with broad leaves spread upon the knotts very finely wrought, all beinge of most fine and curious candlestick metal,

[1] It was probably on account of the huge size of these 'paschals' that the Sarum rubric directs that not the paschal candle itself, but some other in its place, should be taken to the font.

having six candlesticks or flowers coming from it, three of every side. . . . The Pascall in latitude did containe almost the bredth of the Quire, in longitude that did extend to the height of the lower vault, wherein did stand a long piece of wood reaching within a man's height to the uppermost vault roofe of the church. . . . In conclusion, the Pascall was estimated to bee one of the rarest monuments in England.[1]

As a companion to this picture, I may add a more modern account, by Blanco White, of the Paschal candle at the beginning of last century in the Cathedral of Seville.

The service begins this morning without either the sound of bells or musical instruments. The Paschal candle is seen by the north side of the altar. But before I mention the size of that used in our Cathedral, I must protest against all charges of exaggeration. It is in fact a pillar of wax, nine yards in height and thick in proportion, standing on a regular marble pedestal. It weighs eighty *arrobas*, or two thousand pounds of twelve ounces. This candle is cast and painted new every year, the old one being broken into pieces on the Saturday preceding Whit Sunday, the day when part of it is used for the consecration of the baptismal font. The sacred torch is lighted with the *new fire*, which this morning the priest strikes out of a flint, and it burns during service until Ascension Day. A chorister in his surplice climbs

[1] *Durham Rites*. Surtees Society, p. 9.

up a gilt-iron rod, furnished with steps like a flagstaff, and having the top railed in, so as to admit of a seat on the level with the end of the candle. From this crow's-nest, the young man lights up and trims the wax pillar, drawing off the melted wax with a large iron ladle.[1]

The rite of the Paschal candle is very intimately connected with the pious objects of devotion called Agnus Deis, which are made in Rome chiefly out of the wax of the Paschal candles of former years. This practice is a very ancient one, and Mgr. Duchesne is inclined to believe, though as I think on insufficient grounds, that it is more ancient than the use of the Paschal candle itself.

[1] Leucadio Doblado (Blanco White, *Letters from Spain*, p. 299.

CHAPTER XI

Easter Sunday

THE unknown author of a twelfth century English Homily for Easter Day, describing the preparation which he considered requisite in order to make a good Easter Communion, thinks it necessary to go back to the very beginning of Lent.

In a becoming manner [he says], cometh that man to housel who in the first place showeth the priest his sins (on Shrove Tuesday), and forsaketh and bewaileth them and taketh therefore good instruction; and secondly, receiveth the holy ashes upon his head and the six pains which thereto belong, *scilicet, vigilias, labores, saccum, (verbera,)*[1] *inedia, sitim,* that is, vigils and toil, hard cloths, smart blows, seldom to eat and less often to drink; thirdly, to go in procession on Palm Sunday; fourthly, to receive absolution on Shere Thursday which looseneth the sin-bonds; fifthly, to creep to the cross on Long Friday; sixthly, to go on Easter Eve around the

1 This or some such word seems accidentally to have been omitted by the transcriber of the manuscript.

font, which denoteth the holy sepulchre;[1] and seventhly, to go to the holy board and to eat the bread.

This enumeration the same preacher reiterates at the end of his discourse:

Let each of us now [he says] take heed to himself whether he has come in a befitting manner; that is, to true shrift, to holy ashes, to procession on Palm Sunday, to absolution on Shere Thursday, to the holy cross on Long Friday, to the procession about the font on Easter Eve. And if we have come with the comely garment of innocency, that is, cleansing, so that we have forsaken our sins, and by the confessor's direction have amended, or begun to amend, and to pray for mercy, then may we go in a becoming manner to God's table, and worthily partake of His Body, and through the holy dainty (*este*) come to our arising (*ariste*).[2] *Quod vobis prestet qui hodie surrexit et vivit cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus Sancti*, etc. (the equivalent of our modern formula, 'a blessing which I wish you all, etc.').[3]

[1] This is a rather perplexing statement as it stands, for though the font was visited with some such object on Easter Sunday and the following days, there is nothing to suggest this symbolism on Holy Saturday; but the manuscript is very carelessly written, and there may be some words omitted which would have shown that this latter clause really preserves a reference to the Easter sepulchre.

[2] This is a play upon the words *este* (dainty), *ariste* (arising), and *estre* (Easter).

[3] *Old English Homilies*, Ed. R. Morris (E.E.T.S.), second series, pp. 95 and 99.

It may readily be understood that for those who had thus thoroughly identified themselves with the ceremonial life of the Church, and who, in particular, had unswervingly complied with her law of fasting, as nine-tenths of the population in the middle ages may be presumed to have done, the coming of Easter brought with it a sense of peace and spiritual joy, of which we in these degenerate days have little experience. It seems to me, in reading the homilies and other literary remains of those times, that the annual commemoration of our Lord's Resurrection was palpably a greater event to the Christians of that age than it is to us. They had fairly earned the physical and moral relief of Easter, and they knew they had earned it, and when our Lord came to them on Easter morning, it was pre-eminently in his office of Redeemer and Deliverer that they were prepared to welcome Him.

This probably explains to us why the descent of our Saviour into limbo, 'The Harrowing of Hell,' as it was popularly called, was at this season such a favourite subject of contemplation with our forefathers. Though we still say in the Creed: 'He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead,' most of us are disposed to give little thought to the first clause of this article. But for the Christians of an earlier age it possessed a more human interest than even Christ's glorious

resurrection. Was it not on this blessed night (*hac sacratissima nocte*) that Adam and Eve, long centuries before banished from Paradise, even as the penitents had been expelled from the Church on Ash Wednesday, were at last set free from their thraldom by Him who had conquered death and sin? A multitude of rude pictures and carvings, as well as of quaint legends, bear witness to the prominence given to the Harrowing of Hell in the imagination of the faithful.[1] The Easter sermon in the *Blickling Homilies*, a discourse probably belonging to the time of King Athelstan or King Edgar, bears striking witness to this curious point of view. Almost the whole sermon is taken up with a minute description of our Saviour's visit to hell, with the joy of the holy souls who had been kept so long in bondage and with the consternation of the fiends.

Then were the devils exceedingly terrified, and exclaimed thus, saying: 'Whence is this man, thus strong, thus glorious, and thus terrible? The world was previously long subject to us, and death yielded to us much tribute. Never before has it happened to us that death has thus been put an

[1] Let me refer, to take only a single instance, to Passus xxi. of *Piers Plowman*, which begins with a reference to Palm Sunday and ends with Easter Day, and is almost entirely taken up with the Harrowing of Hell. The chief source of all these legends seems to have been the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus. See R. P. Wülcker, *Das Evangelium Nicodemi in der Abendländischen Literatur*.

end to, nor even before has such terror befallen to us and to hell. . . . Hearest thou, our chief? This is the same for whose death thou hast long striven. And thou didst promise us with thy support much spoil at last. . . . Now he hath put all thy darkness to flight through his brightness, and hath broken all thy prison in pieces; and all those whom thou previously heldest captive he hath set free, and their life he hath turned to joy, and those now mock us who previously sighed under our bonds. . . . There is now no weeping nor lamentation heard here, as was previously wont to be, in this place of torment. . . . All those riches, which thou our chief obtainedst in the beginning through the boldness and disobedience of the first man and the forfeiture of Paradise—all these he hath now seized, and through Christ's cross all thy bliss is turned to grief.' . . . Then all the iron bolts of hell's locks were broken, and forthwith the innumerable hosts of sanctified souls who previously were held captive did obeisance to the Saviour, and with weeping supplication prayed to Him thus, saying: 'Thou didst come to us as the Redeemer of the world. Thou didst come to us—the hope of heaven and earth's hosts, and also our hope—for of yore the prophets foretold Thy coming, and we hoped and trusted in Thy coming hither. Thou didst give on earth forgiveness of sins to men, set us free from hell's power and hell's bondage.' [1]

Much more follows in the same strain, and

[1] *The Blickling Homilies* (E.E.T.S.), pp. 85–87.

in particular Adam and Eve are represented as first addressing separately their petitions, and afterwards expressing their boundless joy and gratitude to the Deliverer. It might be said that in some sense all this is an expansion of the words in the Easter sequence: [1]

Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando
Dux vitae mortuus regnat vivus.

Together Death and Life
In a strange conflict strove,
The Prince of Life, who died
Now lives and reigns.

In the *Vision of Piers Plowman* one of the dead that rose from the grave after the earthquake during the eclipse on Good Friday is supposed to describe how the battle between Death and Life is proceeding:

Life and death in this darkness here, one fordoth (is slaying) the other.
And shall no wight wit witterliche (for certain) who shall have the mastery
Ere (before) Sunday about sunrising. [2]

The words of the prophet Hosea (xiii. 14),

[1] Of course the sequence *Victimae Paschali* is posterior in date to the *Blickling Homilies*, the only extant manuscript of which was written in 971. The sermons themselves are probably older.
[2] C. Text, Passus xxi. l. 69.

Mors ero mors tua. 'O Death I will be thy death,' which occur in an Antiphon of the Tenebrae Office,[1] were universally interpreted as embodying the same idea; and the beautiful Paris hymn for the Vespers of Easter Day, *Forti tegente brachio*, alludes to them very pointedly—

Christ is our Sacrifice,
The Lamb come down from high:
Death's angel dread descries
His blood, and passes by.

O Victim worthy Heaven,
Of death the victory,
Who chains of hell hath riven
And borne her gates away.

From jaws of the dark tomb
He bursts into the light
And opes beyond the gloom
The heavenly infinite.[2]

More than one curious legend was associated with Our Blessed Saviour's descent into hell, and of these perhaps the most ancient is that commemorated in the verses of the Christian poet, Prudentius, which attributes to the Easter vigil a certain mitigation in the torments of the lost:

[1] Compare, of course, also 1 Cor. xv. 54–55. 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'

[2] *Hymns from the Paris Breviary*, by the author of *The Cathedral*

Even beneath the realms of Styx
The guilty spirits holy days enjoy,
Respite from penal fire on that blest night
Whereon our holy God returned
From lake of Acheron to heavenly light.

Nor doth the day-star rising from the sea
Lighten the darkness with his brilliant torch,
As doth our Lord, for those who grieve His cross
Rising again more potent than the sun,
Restore to this sad world new light of day.

Milder burn the penal fires,
Less fiercely rage the sulphurous streams
Of Tartarus; the prisoners there
Confined, from earth discharged, enjoy
Some respite from their pain.

The Easter Communion

The command under threat of ecclesiastical pains and penalties to receive the Blessed Eucharist at Easter time, dates only from the fourth council of Lateran in the year 1215.[1] But, as some of the passages quoted in Chapter II plainly show, ecclesiastical authorities had previously expected from the laity a great deal more than Communion once in the twelvemonth. Even the secular laws of King Ethelred prescribe as a

[1] Cap. xxi., Omnis utriusque sexus. If this law be not complied with, the Council enjoins that the offender is to be prevented from entering the church during his life-time, and denied Christian burial after his death: 'Alioquin et vivens ab ingressu ecclesiæ arceatur et moriens Christiana careat sepultura.'

minimum, that every one should receive the Blessed Sacrament three times in the year,[1] while Archbishop Wulfstan and other bishops of that age, as we have already seen,[2] exhort all the faithful to approach the Holy Table on Maundy Thursday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday, to say nothing of what might be customary at other seasons. At this date, of course, the usage still persisted of communicating under both species; the Precious Blood being usually received, as it still is when the Pope celebrates pontifically, through a fistula or tube. When the chalice was withdrawn from the laity the custom was introduced of administering a 'purification' of unconsecrated wine after the reception of the Sacred Host. The custom is observed even now in some churches on the Continent, especially upon Easter Sunday and other similar occasions of general Communion, and it is curious to note that the *Ceremoniale Episcoporum* prescribes it, or at least assumes the existence of such a practice at the solemn High Mass, which the Bishop is supposed to celebrate for the Communion on Easter Day. This purification was administered by one of the clergy to ecclesiastics and laity alike as they left the sanctuary after communicating. Indeed, in the time of Innocent III it would seem

[1] Thorpe, *Ancient Laws*, pp. 132 and 137. This rule was derived from the council of Agde (A.D. 506), which under pain of excommunication enjoined communion at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.

[2] See above, p. 60.

to have been still common to pour a small portion of the Precious Blood into the chalice which contained the unconsecrated wine for this purpose.[1] The practice, as might be expected, gave rise to some misunderstanding, and was not long retained. In England a Provincial Constitution of Archbishop Peckham enacted that parish priests were carefully to instruct the people that the wine of which they partook after Communion at Easter was nothing but ordinary wine, given them that they might swallow the Blessed Sacrament more easily.

What is of more interest is the importance which the *Ceremoniale* seems to attach to the Easter Communion itself. It directs that on Easter Day the bishop ought by all means (*debet omnino*) to celebrate Mass solemnly in his own cathedral, and there distribute holy communion to the people. In its references to this solemnity the official rubrical code of the Church seems to perpetuate the memory of an earlier usage, whereby, as on Maundy Thursday, so on Easter Sunday, the bishop alone celebrated, and canons, priests, and lay folk received Communion from his hands. In the earliest ages of the Church we read that the monks of the desert gathered together to the number of fifty thousand to celebrate their Easter in common and to be present at the Mass of their Abbot St. Pachomius. At a somewhat later period, the same instinctive desire for some outward

[1] See in the *Corpus Juris*, cap. *Ex parte* in the *De Celebratione Missarum*.

manifestation of their union in Christ on this great foundation festival of the Christian faith, found expression in the kiss of peace, with which all the faithful, whether monks or lay folk, saluted each other when they first met on Easter morning. It is even probable that the *Ceremoniale Episcoporum* still preserves a striking memorial of that pious usage, for it directs that when at this paschal Mass the bishop distributes holy communion to the canons and the sacred ministers, they are first of all to kiss his hand as he holds before them the Sacred Host, and then when they have received Communion to kiss his cheek. The intimate association between the *pax* and the reception of the Blessed Eucharist has come before us more than once in the course of these chapters,[1] and indeed the very name 'communion' teaches the same lesson. Nothing can symbolize in a more striking way the truth that we are all members of one mystical body than this participation in common of the Flesh and Blood of Christ. 'Seeing,' says St. Paul, 'that we, who are many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of the one bread.'[2]

The General Communion enjoined upon all the faithful was in the beginning prescribed for Easter Day alone. The obligation was not satisfied by

[1] I may point out here that formerly Communion was not given in Masses for the Dead, and in these Masses there is also no kiss of peace.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 17; cf. 1 Cor. xii. 12–27.

receiving the sacraments even on Maundy Thursday or Easter Tuesday; and it is easy to understand that the sense of union and fellowship among Christians which the Church undoubtedly wished to promote by this ordinance must suffer in a measure from any relaxation in the strictness of the rule.

However, in her consideration for human infirmity, the Church has thought well to concede so ample an interval for the satisfying of these obligations that no excuse can be pleaded by the backward and the dilatory. On the other hand the tendency to look upon Easter as a home feast, a day when each member of the Christian family ought to occupy his own place in his Father's house, has lingered in spite of all relaxations. Where parishes exist in the strict canonical sense, the faithful are normally bound to hear their Sunday Mass and to make their Easter Communion in the parish church. In Rome itself, and in many other places, on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday Communion is given in the parish churches and nowhere else. In this country there are no parishes accurately speaking, and consequently no strict obligation exists to attend any particular church for Mass and Communion. But the collections made on this day for the support of the clergy suggest that the faithful are not expected to be absentees from the mission church which they are bound to support, and to which they must look for their sacraments.

In many French dioceses it was formerly the custom for the curé at the Mass of Easter Day, before the General Communion, to read out to his parishioners a long instruction, followed by an equally long profession of faith and confession of sins, which all repeated after him. Then a general absolution was given resembling that found in some of the orders for private penance. The whole form dates from the fifteenth century, or earlier, and belongs to a time when the Communion had to be made rigorously on Easter Sunday itself.[1] Some of the details of the instruction are curious, for instance the following:

Item, I forbid all my parishioners, male or female, of this parish, to go to receive their Saviour outside of this church, without having permission from me the Curé, for every one ought to know the command of the Church, to the effect that, 'every Christian man is bound to confess to his own Curé or his deputy and to receive his Saviour at Easter'; and herein obedience is better than sacrifice. Moreover, it is a most dangerous thing to receive one's Saviour outside the parish; for if any one should receive Him from a religious without permission, the religious, according to the holy canons, would be excommunicated, and so would he be who received the Body of our Lord, through his participation with the religious thus ex-

[1] It must therefore presumably be older than the year 1440, when Pope Eugenius IV, by the constitution *Dig a fide*, allowed the Communion to be made on any day between Palm Sunday and Low Sunday. For this country the limit of time has been much further extended.

communicated, and consequently he would not receive his Saviour worthily, but only to his own damnation.[1]

The Easter Sepulchre

Already in connexion with the Quarant 'Ore, and again in the chapter on Maundy Thursday, mention has been made of the term 'sepulchre' as applied to the altar at which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. When considered from the standpoint of our modern practice, the word, as already noticed, seems to involve a contradiction, or at least an anachronism. But in the ceremony of older date from which it has no doubt descended to us, its appropriateness cannot be questioned. In this country unfortunately no trace of this older ceremony has been preserved,[2] though it survives in many parts of Germany and Spain. None the less, our existing Easter sequence the *Victimæ paschali*, undoubtedly owes its origin to the picturesque dramatic rites associated with the sepulchre, and I shall consequently be guilty of no violent digression in discussing the matter here. So far as can be seen,[3] the earliest

[1] Martène, *De Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus*, iii. p. 175.

[2] The solemn Benediction on Holy Saturday evening, a tradition which modern Stonyhurst seems to have inherited from its St. Omers days, may possibly preserve a trace of some ancient usage akin to the veneration of the Easter sepulchre. Moreover, we may say, as pointed out in chap. iii., that the *Quarant' Ore* itself has undoubtedly descended from the forty hours' watching of the sepulchre in Holy Week.

[3] I take this chiefly upon the authority of Lange, who in his *Latcinischen Osterfeiern*, seems to have gone very thoroughly into

account of any such ritual meets us upon English soil in a monastic rule already many times mentioned,—the *Concordia Regularis*, attributed commonly to St. Dunstan, but in reality drawn up by his contemporary St. Æthelwold. It may be noted that the writer seems to imply that the ceremonial was already in use in other monasteries.

When [he says, speaking of Good Friday], the ceremony of the kissing of the cross is over, let there be prepared on one side of the altar, wherever there may be room, some sort of a representation of the sepulchre with a curtain (*velamen*) round it, and here, after the holy cross has been venerated, let it be deposited after this manner. Let the deacons come who first took it down and let them wrap it in a linen shroud (*sindone*) in the place in which it was venerated. Then let them bear it away singing the antiphons, *In pace in idipsum* and *Caro mea requiescet in spe*, until they come to the place of the sepulchre, and there laying down the cross, as if they were really burying the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, let them recite the antiphon, *Sepulto domino signatum est monumentum, ponentes milites qui custodirent eum.*[1] And in this

the subject. Some sort of Easter sepulchre seems, however, as we shall see, to have been known to St. Ulrick of Augsburg, a contemporary of Dunstan's. The reference made to St. Isidore of Seville in Kraus, *Realencyclopädie*, article *Gründonnerstag*, seems to be a mistake.

[1] Nearly all these antiphons occur now in the Tenebrae service, and may be found in the Holy Week books. St. Æthelwold cites them by their first words. This last means: 'The Lord having been buried, a seal was set upon the tomb, and they placed soldiers to guard Him.'

same spot let the holy cross be kept with all reverence until the night of the Lord's Resurrection, and during the night-time let the brethren be divided into watches of two or three, or even more if the community be large enough, so that they may keep faithful vigil in the same spot, singing psalms the while.

Then follows an account of the ceremonies of Easter morning:

Very early, before the bells are rung for Matins, let the sacristan remove the cross (from the sepulchre) and restore it to its proper place. . . . Then while the third lesson is being read, let four of the brethren vest, one of whom, wearing an alb only, is to enter the church as if he came for some other purpose, and betake himself unobserved to the sepulchre, where he shall seat himself in silence, holding a palm in his hand. Then while the third responsory is being sung the other three shall approach, all attired in copes and carrying in their hands thuribles with incense. Let them advance to the sepulchre step by step, like men who are searching for something; for all this is done to represent the angel seated within the tomb and the women coming with spices to anoint the body of Jesus. And when he who is seated there observes these three drawing near, wandering, as it were, to look for something they have lost, let him begin to chant sweetly in a voice of moderate pitch *Quem quæritis?* (Whom seek ye). Then when he has sung to the last note, let the three answer with one common voice: *Jesum Nazarenum.* To whom he again: *Non est hic, surrexit sicut prædixerat. Ite nuntiate*

quia surrexit a mortuis.[1] Then at the sound of the dismissal let all three turn towards the choir saying: *Alleluia, surrexit Dominus* (the Lord is risen). After this he who is seated, calling them back, as it were, shall intone the antiphon: *Venite et videte locum* (Come and behold the place). As he says this he rises, lifts the curtain and shows them the place now bereft of the cross, with only the linen cloth lying there in which the cross had been wrapped. At this sight they put down behind the sepulchre the thuribles which they had been carrying, then take the linen shroud, spreading it out before all the clergy, and while thus as it were displaying it, to show that our Lord is risen and is no longer wrapped therein, they sing the antiphon, *Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro* (The Lord is risen from the tomb), after which they spread the shroud upon the altar.[2]

I make no apology for quoting this liturgical memorial of the tenth century at full length. It is not only a document of native growth, but it is the earliest detailed account of the ceremonial of the Easter sepulchre which is known to exist. Moreover, it may be said with strict truth that from this germ the whole of modern drama has developed, for in every country the religious play has led the way and the comedy and tragedy of secular literature have begun as a kind of ex-

[1] 'He is not here. He has risen as He had foretold. Go ye and announce that He has risen from the dead.'

[2] Dunstan (Ethelwold), *Concordia Regularis.* Migne, *P.L.* vol. 137, p. 495.

crescence. On the other hand, the religious play itself, whether mystery or miracle or morality, grew out of the scraps of strictly liturgical dialogue which was introduced at two or three great festivals, and of which the extract I have quoted is the most ancient specimen known to us.

It would be tempting to pursue this subject further,[1] but to do so would be to travel outside the scope of this book. Let me note, however, that in the course of a few centuries this simple drama of Easter morning assumed in many places a much more elaborate and complex form. Several new elements were introduced, of which the race to the tomb by Peter and John, and the apparition of our Saviour to St. Mary Magdalen under the form of a gardener, were the most noteworthy. And with this came the adoption of the famous sequence *Victimæ Paschali*, still retained in our Missal, the dramatic character of which must strike the most careless reader, as also its adaptability to such a scene as St. Æthelwold has just described for us. The text of this 'prose' is first found in certain manuscripts of the eleventh century, and it is generally supposed to be of German origin. It is said to be an excellent example of the transition from the earliest unrhymed Notkerian sequences to the regular

[1] It would be useless to attempt to give a catalogue of the numerous writers who have written on the liturgical drama of the middle ages. The most recent and satisfactory work which deals with the ritual of Easter Day is that of Lange, *Die Lateinischen Osterfeiern.*

rhyming sequences of Adam of St. Victor. I quote Fr. Caswall's version, which reproduces this peculiarity of construction, beginning with mere rhythm and ending in rhyme.

Forth to the paschal Victim, Christians, bring
Your sacrifice of praise :
The Lamb redeems the sheep ;
And Christ, the Sinless One,
Hath to the Father sinners reconciled.
Together Death and Life
In a strange conflict strove ;
The Prince of Life, who died,
Now lives and reigns.
What thou sawest, Mary, say
As thou wentest on the way.
I saw the tomb wherein the Living One had lain,
I saw His glory as He rose again ;
Napkin and linen clothes, and angels twain ;
Yea, Christ is risen, my hope, and He
Will go before you into Galilee.
We know that Christ indeed has risen from the grave :
Hail, thou King of Victory !
Have mercy, Lord, and save.[1]

To return to St. Æthelwold's ritual quoted above, we may note the striking realism of all the arrangements, the relays of watchers main-

1 Caswall, *Lyra Catholica* (1884), p. 233. The text of this sequence in the Roman Missal omits two lines which appear commonly in the manuscripts, viz. :

'Credendum est magis soli Mariæ veraci
Quam Judæorum turbæ fallaci.'

and then : 'Scimus Christum resurexisse,' etc.

tained during the night, and the duration of the vigil, lasting from before noon on the Friday to shortly after midnight on the Sunday morning, a period of nearly forty hours. At the same time, it is quite clear that at this epoch the Blessed Sacrament was not laid in the sepulchre with the cross, and hence we are not always justified in inferring that the mere mention of successive watchers points necessarily to the presence of the Eucharist, much less to Exposition. It was not long, however, in England and in France before the Sacred Host was placed in the sepulchre along with the cross.[1] We may take it that this practice

[1] The usage of burying the Blessed Sacrament in the sepulchre along with the cross was certainly known at Salisbury from the beginning of the thirteenth century, but it was not universal in England, and at Hereford, as at Rouen, only the cross was buried on Good Friday. The fourteenth century Hereford Ordinal speaks thus: 'Afterwards let the holy cross be carried by the priests to the door of the sepulchre, and let it be there washed with wine and water and wiped with a towel, the choir meantime singing in an undertone the responsorium *Tenebræ factæ sunt*, etc. Whilst it is being placed in the sepulchre let them sing the antiphons *In pace in idipsum* and *Caro mea*, etc. Let the Bishop incense the sepulchre and the cross, and a candle being lighted within let him close the sepulchre. The choir humbly continues *Sepulto Domino*,' etc. (cf. Frere, *Sarum Consuetudinary*, i. p. 153). By the time, however, that the Hereford Missal, more than a century later, appeared in a printed edition, these directions had been modified, and the Blessed Sacrament was now enclosed in the sepulchre with the crucifix as at Sarum. Mr. Edmund Bishop, in his paper on 'Sarum and Rouen' in the *Transactions of the St. Osmund's Society*, has called attention to the fact that at Rouen and Hereford the cross to be venerated was uncovered by means of a stick, at Sarum the priest removed the veil with his hand. At Rouen and Hereford the cross was placed in the sepulchre between the rite of its veneration and the procession with the Blessed Sacrament. At Sarum not until Vespers had been said.

was almost certainly introduced in many places in the twelfth century, and we find it fully established at Sarum in the thirteenth. Without entering upon a tedious disquisition as to dates, it will be simpler to quote the description of English usage just before the Reformation, left to us in the famous Durham Rites.[1]

Within the Abbey Church of Durham upon Good Friday there was marvellous solemn service, in the which service time, after the Passion was sung, two of the oldest monks took a goodly large crucifix, all of gold, of the picture of our Saviour Christ nailed upon the Cross. [*Then follows a description of the 'Creeping to the Cross.'*] The service being ended, the two said monks did carry the Cross to the Sepulchre with great reverence, which Sepulchre was set up in the morning on the north side of the Quire, nigh to the High Altar, before the service time, and there did lay it within the said Sepulchre with great devotion, with another picture [i.e., statue] of our Saviour Christ, in whose Breast they did enclose with great reverence the Most Holy and Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, censing it, singing and praying unto it upon their knees a great space, and setting two tapers lighted before it, which tapers did burn unto Easter Day in the morning, when it was taken forth.

The account then goes on to describe how the removal of the Blessed Sacrament 'between three and four of the clock on the morning of Easter Day' was made the occasion of a procession, upon

[1] *The Rites of Durham* (Surtees Society), 1842, pp. 10, 11.

the splendours of which the writer expatiates, and especially upon the monstrance in which the Blessed Eucharist had been enclosed in the sepulchre. 'It was a marvellous beautiful image of our Saviour, representing the Resurrection, with a cross in His hand, in the breast whereof was enclosed in bright crystal the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, through the which crystal the Blessed Host was conspicuous to the beholders.' Many similar monstrances were preserved in other English churches for the same purpose, and it would be easy to occupy much space in gathering together the scattered notices which have been preserved of Easter sepulchres in all parts of the country. In many churches permanent altars were set apart for this purpose, and the carved figures of the guards, sleeping beside the tomb, formed an almost invariable feature in their decoration, several examples of which are still extant. Upon the extremely direct and natural significance of all these ceremonies, when enacted on the Friday, Saturday, and the early morning of Sunday, I need lay no stress. Even to this day this ancient type, of what is in all strictness an Easter sepulchre, survives in many parts of Germany, the Tyrol, and elsewhere in Europe; and it is very dear to the hearts of the devout populace who have preserved the tradition for centuries.

I think I need no excuse for borrowing from a singularly interesting account of these ceremonies in the diocese of Augsburg which has recently

been published by Herr M. Raich in the magazine *Der Katholik*, of Mainz.[1] He points out that the rite extends back to the time of St. Ulrick, Bishop of Augsburg in the tenth century, who is said, after celebrating Mass and distributing Communion on Good Friday (this seems to have been then the Augsburg usage), to have 'buried according to custom what remained of the Body of Christ,' (*consuetudinario modo quod remanserat sepulto.*)[2] The custom can be traced through the Middle Ages, and still survives. Thus the Augsburg Rituale of the present day directs that the celebrant shall consecrate three Hosts on Maundy Thursday, one of which he consumes, the second he reserves for the Good Friday Mass, the third is placed in a chalice covered with a pall, paten and white veil; and after the Mass of the Presanctified is carried to the 'holy sepulchre,' which is to be erected in a chapel or at a side altar. During this procession, at which black vestments, etc., are used, the choir sings the antiphon, '*Caligaverunt oculi mei a fletu meo, &c.* On reaching the holy sepulchre this Host is placed in a monstrance for veneration, and in the evening it is removed to an altar prepared for its reception. During this Exposition it is customary to cover the monstrance with a white veil.

Old and young alike, says Herr Raich, regard the

[1] *Religiose Völksgebräuche im Bisthum Augsburg.* See particularly the number for March, 1902, pp. 261, *seq.*

[2] Vita S. Udalrici, in *Mon. German. Hist.*, Scrip. iv. p. 392.

sepulchre as a splendid pageant commemorative of our Lord's sufferings, and the wish of the people to have a really beautiful sepulchre has afforded scope for the employment of many forms of Christian art. Among the essential features are comprised a nearly life-sized carved or painted figure of the Saviour, the guards, the throne for the Blessed Sacrament, and the so-called 'Holy Sepulchre globes.' These are variously coloured glass globes about four inches in diameter, filled with water, which are arranged in rows one above another around the sepulchre, often to the number of many score, and are brilliantly illuminated by means of oil lamps placed behind them. In order to heighten the colour effect the water is mixed with chemicals and brilliant pigments. The church windows are also hung with black draperies in order to exclude the daylight. The more ancient 'holy sepulchres' are sometimes arranged like little theatres, having side scenes and a background, and they are frequently of large dimensions. In the convents and parish churches in towns, quite a garden of flowers is often set out before the sepulchre.

Throughout the whole diocese of Augsburg prayers are said before these sepulchres during the day, sometimes aloud, with the Rosary and 'the thirty years beads' (thirty-three Paternosters in honour of the thirty-three years of our Lord's life), sometimes in solemn silence. According to old custom, a certain number of the parishioners

are told off to be present at each of these services at appointed hours. Those in the outlying districts commonly choose their own time. The last service, at about four or five o'clock, is usually a 'general' service, in order that those who have been detained at home during the hour allotted to them, may be able now to satisfy their obligation.

After each service all those present proceed to the '*adoration of the cross*.' From the little child up to the decrepit octogenarian, all kneel in devout prayer before the crucifix exposed before them, and finally, in turn, kiss the Five Sacred Wounds. Then each one deposits his offering towards the maintenance of the 'holy sepulchre' in a plate placed there for the purpose. These offerings were formerly in kind, such as oil, tallow, lard, etc., now they are made in money. At Traubing in Upper Bavaria, eggs for the use of the Sacristan are also brought.

Before the deposition of the Blessed Sacrament all the people listen with profound attention to the 'holy sepulchre music,' a long performance by the choir, who bring to its rendering their best skill, and the simple but pathetic strains of which move all hearts to devotion.

Finally, on the evening of Holy Saturday, in all the parish churches a rite is observed, which although certainly not to be found in the Roman Liturgy, is very dear to the crowded congregations who assemble there. This is, or rather was, known as

the 'celebration of the Resurrection.' In the Middle Ages it took place at midnight, and was called, as we have said, '*Commemoratio Dominicæ Resurrectionis*,' but the ceremony is now officially known as the '*Ordo levandi Corpus Domini e Sepulchro*' (the order for removing the Body of the Lord from the tomb). The priest, clad in white vestments, proceeds to the sepulchre, removes the Blessed Sacrament, and after appropriate antiphons a procession is formed, in which the Sacred Host is carried round the building. When the priest has again reached the entrance, a ceremony takes place, similar to that prescribed in the Roman Missal for the procession on Palm Sunday, and in the Pontifical, for the consecration of a church. The door is closed. The priest demands entrance three times, singing with voice raised higher at each repetition, '*Attollite portas principes vestras et elevamini portæ æternales.*' The choir continues: '*Et introibit rex gloriæ.*' The cross-bearer meanwhile knocks at the door with the lower end of the stem of the cross, first once, then twice, lastly three times. Then a chorister within the church asks in reply, '*Quis est iste rex gloriæ?*' and from without comes the answer, '*Dominus fortis et potens, Dominus potens in prælio—Dominus virtutum ipse est rex gloriæ!*'[1] Then the doors are

[1] This dialogue is taken from Ps. xxiii.:

'Lift up your gates, ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates: and the King of Glory shall enter in.

'Who is this King of Glory? The Lord who is strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. . . . The Lord of hosts he is the King of Glory.'

opened, and the procession passes in. On reaching the altar, the priest sings generally three times, and in a higher note at each repetition, 'Christ is risen.' The choir, augmented by instruments (among which the kettle-drums and trumpets are general favourites), each time answers with the hymn:

'Christ is risen! Let Christians now rejoice!
He rises from the tomb and lives, no more to die.
To Him be Glory, Praise and Honour given. Alleluia.'[1]

A *Te Deum*, with Easter prayers and Benediction, ends the Resurrection celebration.

It must be noticed that this representation of the opening of closed doors originally had reference to the descent into Limbo and the Harrowing of Hell. This is shown by the antiphon which was formerly sung at each time of going round the church: '*Cum rex gloriæ Christus infernum debellaturus intraret et chorus angelicus ante faciem ejus portas principum tolli præciperet.*' Thus Christ fights with the lower regions, breaks their 'high portals,' and sets free the just souls in Limbo. Hence, according to the Rituals, instead of 'Christ is risen' may be sung the hymn, '*O vere digna hostia, per quam fracta sunt tartara, redempta plebs captivata redit ad vitæ præmium,*' in which a reference to the bursting open of the

[1] This Easter hymn, '*Christus ist erstanden,*' is found in almost all printed agenda from the year 1480. The hymn probably dates from the twelfth century.

doors of the grave is perceived without difficulty.

I have summarized here Herr Raich's interesting account, in spite of its length, because it affords in so many respects the counterpart of what was witnessed throughout the length and breadth of this country down to the time of the Reformation. We still possess in many of our old cathedrals and parish churches the more or less mutilated remnants of old permanent Easter sepulchres with the carved figures of the sleeping guards or the three Marys or other easily recognizable accessories. In one or more of them is found an unmistakable alms basin with cavity and receptacle forming part of the stone work itself. One would have been inclined to wonder what such an alms dish was doing there, but the modern Augsburg practice explains to us that the offerings made during the creeping to the cross on Good Friday were also repeated in the kissing of the cross before the Holy Sepulchre. Again some of us may have been puzzled at a passage in Piers Plowman which speaks clearly of the veneration of the cross after the Easter bells have already rung—

Till the day dawned, these damsels (i.e. Mercy and Truth) danced,
That men rang to the resurrection, and with that I awaked,
And called Kit my wife, and Kalote my daughter ;
' Arise, and go reverence God's resurrection,
And creep on knees to the cross, and kiss it for a jewel,

And rightfullest a relic ; none richer on earth ;
For God's Blessed Body, it bare for our boot.'

It seems clear that the writer had in mind some ceremony, closely parallel to that of Augsburg, which took place either on Holy Saturday afternoon, or else, as the following curious document would suggest, upon Easter Sunday itself. The paper to which I refer obviously has to do with one of those large figures of Christ our Lord used for the Easter Sepulchre, and in which the Sacred Host was enclosed as in a monstrance, according to the description already quoted above from the *Durham Rites*. It lets us know that in the year 1539 Nicholas Shaxton, Bishop of Salisbury, wrote to Thomas Cromwell, to tell him of a case which happened at Salisbury on Easter Day, 'of which the Mayor and his brethren have certified the Council, but maliciously and odiously.' I follow the summary given in Mr. Gairdner's *Calendar* :

John Goodall, the vice-bayly, about 3 p.m., seeing the people kneeling and kissing an image of Christ, standing on an altar on the north side of the choir, wherein, unknown to him, was the Sacrament, told one of the priests to take it away, it being the King's commandment that no such kissing of images should be suffered, but only creeping to the Cross and kissing it on Good Friday and 'Estryn morrow' (i.e., Easter *morning*) ; which both were passed, for it was 3 p.m. The priest being not over-ready to take it away, and the people fast pressing to kiss it, Goodall

commanded his servant to take it down. This was done in obedience to the King's proclamations, but they interpret it as dishonour to the Sacrament and against the King's proclamation that all laudable ceremonies should be kept until otherwise ordered. They exaggerate the thing so far that they gather thereof that Goodall has an heretical opinion of the Sacrament, and contemns the King's proclamation, etc.

Shaxton defends the action of Goodall, states that he himself had sent for the image but could not obtain possession of it, and finally encloses a communication from Goodall. The latter begs Cromwell to consider his services in the extirpation of popishness and idolatry in Sarum, and describes the complaint of their Mayor and his brethren as malicious, adding that:

Thomas Gyndell is most worthy of punishment for his idolatry in kissing the foot of the image, in honour of the Sacrament enclosed therein, he being a graduate of the University. The priest also is to be punished for putting it in an image.

The case is extremely interesting, and also somewhat obscure. But it at any rate lets us know that the veneration of the cross on *Easter morning* was a practice familiar in this country before the Reformation.

I might say much about the archæological details of the Easter sepulchre as they are known to us from existing monuments, but after all they

have little connexion with our existing ceremonial in the Catholic Church. I will only pause to take note of a graceful Latin hymn, popular in many of our churches in this country, which though not mediæval, seems to have been originally written in France to be used in some evening service at the Easter sepulchre on Holy Saturday.[1] I mean the *O filii et filiæ*.

I quote the first few stanzas in Fr. Caswall's version:

Ye sons and daughters of the Lord,
The King of glory, King adored,
This day Himself from death restored.

All in the early morning grey
Went holy women on their way
To see the tomb where Jesus lay.

Of spices pure a precious store
In their pure hands those women bore,
To anoint the sacred Body o'er.

Then straightway one in white they see,
Who saith, 'Ye seek the Lord; but He
Is risen and gone to Galilee.'

This told they Peter, told they John;
Who forthwith to the tomb are gone,
But Peter is by John outrun.

* * * * *

[1] See Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, p. 828.

Now let us praise the Lord most high,
And strive His name to magnify,
On this great day through earth and sky.

Whose mercy ever runneth o'er
Whom men and angel hosts adore,
To Him be glory evermore.

The fact that the watch before the Easter Sepulchre still in some sense survives among us in the Forty Hours' prayer, treated in a former chapter, will perhaps be my best excuse for the space which I have devoted to the discussion of this otherwise obsolete ritual.

Regina Cœli Lætare, Alleluia

The unceasing repetition of the Alleluia is one of the most striking peculiarities of the Paschal Offices, and a word may appropriately be said of it here. The adoption of this Hebrew acclamation, which simply means 'praise Jehova,' is very ancient in the Church. In its unaltered Hebrew form it appears both in the Greek and the Vulgate text of the Apocalypse,[1] as well as in the Septuagint version of several of the Psalms,[2] and in the Book of Tobias.[3] From the Fathers we learn that it was a never ceasing salutation or ejaculation upon the lips of their Christian contemporaries. Tertullian

[1] Apoc. xix. 1.

[2] See e.g. Ps. cv. 1.

[3] Tobias xiii. 22.

seems to suggest that the faithful in his day rounded off their prayers with it, much as they were also accustomed to use the Hebrew word Amen.[1] St. Jerome represents the labourer at the plough-tail solacing himself by singing this joyous refrain,[2] while the pious mother made it her care that the little one upon her knee should learn to lisp 'Alleluia' before any other word. To Sidonius Apollinaris[3] and St. Augustine it recalled the cry of the steersman who marked the time for the rowers tugging at their oars ; and who chanted or seemed to them to chant this Christian acclamation over and over again.[4] And we in our own history, know from the report of Bede that Alleluia was the battle-cry of the stout champions of the Cross, who, in 429, under the leadership of St. Germanus of Auxerre put the Picts and Scots to flight near Mold in North Wales.[5]

We have already seen something of the ceremonies with which the sound of Alleluia was hushed at the beginning of Lent. Its resumption on Holy Saturday is almost lost sight of amid the varied ritual of that wonderful service, and yet the triple chant of Alleluia ascending ever higher and higher which follows the Epistle on that day is a striking feature in itself. More-

[1] Tertull. *De Oratione*, 27.
[2] Jerome, *Ep. ad Marcellum*, Ep. 18.
[3] Sidonius, *Epist.* ii. 11.
[4] Aug. *De Cantico Novo*, 2.
[5] Bede, *Hist. Ang.*, i. 20.

over, in the Episcopal Mass it is introduced with a certain formality that gives it special emphasis. After singing the short Epistle, the subdeacon comes to the Bishop's throne, and bowing low before him, says: 'Venerable Father,[1] I bring you tidings of great joy; it is the Alleluia'; and then the Bishop, rising to his feet, intones the joyous chant with which we are all familiar. But once brought back the Alleluia comes to remain with us, and indeed for those of us who recite the Divine Office, we might say that for fifty days and more this glad song is upon our lips continually. It would be easy to make a long chapter out of the history of the Alleluia, and the quaint interpretations of Durandus and the other mediæval liturgists; but I will content myself with one specimen attributed to Peter of Autun.

Al (he says) is *altissimus*, the Most High; *le* means *levatus est in cruce*, was raised upon the cross; *lu* stands for *lugebant apostoli*; the apostles mourned; *ia* is *iam surrexit*, He has already risen.[2]

Even to the laity the sound of Alleluia is familiar, at least in the antiphon *Regina Cœli*, which is said during Paschal time in place of the Angelus, and said standing. This last rubric,

[1] '*Reverende Pater, annuntio vobis gaudium magnum; hoc est* ALLELUIA.' The form is substantially the same as that with which the announcement of the election of a new Pope is made to the people from the loggia of St. Peter's.

[2] See Blume, *Stimmen aus Maria Laach*, vol. 52, p. 430.

as we have already noticed, takes us back to the very beginning of Christianity, for already in the second century Tertullian lays stress upon the fact that on Sundays, and during this holy Easter time the faithful do not kneel but stand in offering their prayers to God.[1]

As for the *Regina Cœli* itself, a curious mediæval legend connects it with this season and with the name of Pope St. Gregory the Great. It is related by Durandus that a pestilence having broken out in Rome at Easter time, the Pope ordered a procession to be made through the city in which the picture of our Blessed Lady, painted by St. Luke, was to be solemnly carried. This was done, the Pope himself taking part in it, and as they reached the bridge which joins the city with the Vatican, a choir of angels was heard singing above the picture : ' O Queen of Heaven, rejoice, Alleluia ; for He whom thou didst deserve to bear, Alleluia, has risen, as He said, Alleluia.' Then Gregory himself added the last line, ' Pray for us to God, Alleluia,' and bade this antiphon always be sung at Easter. Moreover, on raising his eyes to heaven, the Pope saw standing on the top of the structure, then called the *Moles Hadriani*, an angel sheathing his sword, in token that the visitation of God's anger was at an end. It was in memory of this vision that the *Moles Hadriani* came to be called

[1] Tertullian, *De Corona Militis*, c. 3 ; De Orat., c. 23 ; cf. Thalhofer, *Liturgik*, i. 586 ; Probst, *Lehre und Gebet*, p. 305.

the Castle of Sant' Angelo, and that a statue of an angel with sword and scabbard was erected on its summit. There is, as far as we know, no historical authority for any part of this legend, but it seems probable that Durandus must have borrowed it from some rather early source. In any case it appears to be true that the *Regina Cœli* is more ancient than any of the other antiphons of our Lady.[1]

Easter Eggs

It is curious that a law of the Church, formerly general, but now almost universally abrogated in practice, should have left traces of its presence on both sides of the English Channel—but traces which we may in some sense describe as 'equal and opposite.' Both in Great Britain and on the Continent the law forbidding *lacticinia* (eggs, milk, butter, etc.) during Lent, has, practically speaking, passed away, for milk and eggs are now permitted almost everywhere in Catholic countries except on the last few days of Holy Week. But in England we still eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, because some centuries back that was the last day when the ingredients used in these delicacies could be lawfully partaken of ; and abroad the *œufs de pâques* are still symbolical of Easter good cheer, though pious Catholics have long wearied of the very sight of eggs

[1] Thalhofer, *Liturgik*, ii. p. 453 ; Bäumer, *Geschichte des Breviers*, p. 261.

which appear so frequently in their lenten repasts.[1]

It was, perhaps, not unnatural that after the faithful observance of a rigorous fasting régime for more than six weeks the less fervent souls should look forward to the time when restrictions of diet were removed. We can hardly be surprised, then, when we meet in that long French instruction for Easter day in the diocese of Soissons, to which I have already referred, a warning addressed in the following terms to the more hungry among the layfolk:

Item nul ne doit venir à la Table de Notre Seigneur, s'il n'a ouy messe entière, et ne se doit nul hater de reçevoir son Sauveur pour plutôt boire ou manger viandes nouvelles: car ce seroit gloutonnie, se il n'est cause necessaire.

It was probably as another means of meeting the same difficulty that the Church, which has provided special blessings for every circumstance and emergency of human life, encouraged the bringing of Easter viands even to the altar of God, that they might be hallowed in some distinctive way before the cravings of carnal appetite were indulged. The Roman Ritual preserves a special Easter Benediction for the lamb's flesh, which, in obvious reference to the Jewish Pasch, it is still the custom in many parts of the world

[1] Even in England the end of Lent is probably marked by the custom, which prevails in many parts of the country, of eating custard on Easter Sunday.

to eat at Easter, and also for the eggs which after an abstention of more than six weeks would formerly have seemed so great a delicacy. The blessing in this latter case is very simple.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, favourably to bestow Thy blessing upon these eggs, that so they may be a wholesome food to Thy faithful, who gratefully partake of them in honour of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth, etc.

For the lamb I prefer to quote a blessing found in Egbert's Pontifical, and considerably more than a thousand years old. It differs somewhat in wording, but little in substance from that which still stands in the official *Rituale Romanum*. Here is the Egbertine prayer which is prescribed to be said in the Mass at the end of the Canon, and before the *per quem hæc omnia :*

O God, the Lord of all flesh, who didst give Thy commands to Noe and his sons concerning animals clean and unclean, who didst bid Moses and Thy people to eat a lamb on the eve of the Pasch, in betokening of the Lamb Jesus Christ Our Lord, by whose blood Thou hast ransomed all the first-born of this world, and who didst on that night destroy every first-born in the land of Egypt, protecting only Thy people marked with the blood of the Lamb, vouchsafe, O Almighty Lord, to bless and sanctify this flesh of innocent lambs, that whosoever of thy faithful people may eat thereof, may be filled to repletion with every heavenly blessing and with Thy grace in all good things. Through, etc.

A sumptuous banquet in which a roasted lamb played a conspicuous part was formerly an indispensable feature of the Papal ceremonial at Easter time. A similar custom seems still to be observed at the Spanish court. I quote from a well informed writer, whose article appeared only a few years back.

When the *capilla publica* is over, their majesties and the infantas, accompanied by all who have assisted at it, go into one of the rooms, where a table is laid with a white cloth covered with flowers, in the centre of which stands a whole roast lamb. Plates of many-coloured eggs, bread and salt are placed here and there on the table, and a crucifix between two lighted candles. One of the chaplains of honour holds a missal, from which the Patriarch of the Indies reads a blessing over the lamb, eggs, bread and salt. The servants then cut up the lamb,and their majesties and all present are helped to a small portion of it, which they eat standing. The rest of the lamb is always given to the halberdiers. It is their right from time immemorial.

Let me conclude this Easter chapter and this volume with a quotation from the greatest Christian poet of the middle ages, Adam of St. Victor, a master from whom St. Thomas Aquinas himself has not disdained to borrow. These are the concluding lines of one of Adam's Easter sequences.[1] They express a wish which must be

[1] Here is Mr. Wrangham's translation of these lines :

'Tis the Lord's own day, wherein,
All the world, made clean from sin,
He recalleth ;

in the hearts of all of us on this day which the Lord hath made.

Diem istam Dominus
Fecit, in qua facinus
Mundi lavit,
In qua mors occiditur,
In qua vita redditur,
Hostis ruit.

Geminatum igitur
Alleluya canitur
Corde puro,
Quia culpa tollitur
Et vita promittitur
In futuro.

In hoc mundi vespere
Fac tuos resurgere
Jesu Christe;
Salutaris omnibus
Sis tuis fidelibus
Dies iste! Amen.

Whereon, death's self being slain,
And our life restored again,
Satan falleth.

Therefore from pure hearts once more
Double alleluias soar
Up to heaven;
Since away man's guilt is ta'en
And that he shall live again
Promise given.

Jesus Christ! make Thou Thine own
Rise before the sun goes down
O'er Creation;
May this' day to all who bear
True allegiance to Thee here
Bring Salvation! Amen.

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